

THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER.



RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON & BUNGAY.

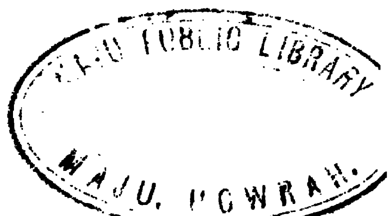
Virtutis specie, pulchro ceu pallio amictus
  Quisque catus nebulo sordida facta tegit.
Atque suis manibus commissa potentia, durum
  Et dirum subito vergit ad imperium.
Hinc, nimium dum latro aurum detrudit in arcam,
  Idem aurum latet in pectore pestis edax ;
Nutrit avaritiam et fastum, suspendere adunco
  Suadet naso inopes, et vitium omne docet.
Auri at larga probo si copia contigit, instar
  Roris dilapsi ex æthere cuncta beat:
Tum, quasi numen inesset, alit, fovet, educat orbos,
  Et viduas lacrymis ora rigare vetat.
Quo sua crimina jure auro derivet avarus,
  Aurum animæ pretium qui cupit atque capit?
Lege pari gladium incuset sicarius atrox
  Cæso homine, et ferrum judicet esse reum.

PAPILIO ET LIMAX.*

Qui subito ex imis, rerum in fastigia surgit
  Nativas sordes, quicquid agitur, olet.

* The two first lines only of the "Butterfly and Snail."

THE END.



PRINCIPLES

OF

POLITICAL ECONOMY.



THE "CHANDOS CLASSICS."

THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER.

COMPLETE EDITION,

With Memoir, Explanatory Notes, &c.



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PREFATORY MEMOIR

OF

WILLIAM COWPER.

WILLIAM COWPER, the son of the Rev. John Cowper, was born at Great Berkhamstead Rectory, on the 26th of November, 1731. His family was of ancient descent, capable of being traced back without interruption to the time of Edward IV. on his father's side. His mother, Ann, daughter of Roger Donne, of Ludham Hall, Norfolk, was of the family of the celebrated and excellent Dr. Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, and was said to be descended from King Henry III. through four different lines.

When Cowper was only six years old the great misfortune of his life befell him: his mother died. What that loss was to the tender sensitive child we can best judge by his own exquisite lines addressed to her picture, which he received from his cousin, Ann Bodham, more than fifty years afterwards. She left also a newly born child, his brother John, who survived to manhood; five other children had died in their infancy.

In less than a year after his mother's death, Cowper was sent to school at a Dr. Pitman's, Market Street, between St. Albans and Dunstable. Here he suffered for two years from the most cruel bullying on the part of the elder boys; his shyness, physical delicacy, and sensitive nature exposing him in a peculiar manner to their savage tormenting. Of one of these young tyrants, Cowper writes:—

"I had such a dread of him, that I did not dare lift my eyes to his face. I knew him best by his shoe-buckle." But the cruelty exercised by this young savage was at length discovered, the coward was expelled, and Cowper was taken from the school.

The next two years he spent under the care of an oculist, who attended him for inflammation of the eyes. From this home he was removed to Westminster School. Here his dull and suffering young life brightened. He was an excellent scholar, and became also a good cricketer and foot-ball player. The usher of his form was Vincent Bourne—celebrated for his Latin poetry, which his pupil afterwards translated. His chief school friends were, Robert Lloyd, the son of Dr. Pierson Lloyd, another usher; William Russell, Warren Hastings, George Colman, Charles Churchill, and Cumberland. To these he was sincerely and faithfully attached; proofs of his friendship for them are scattered through his poems. While still a Westminster scholar, he wrote his first poem, in imitation of

Philips' "Splendid Shilling" (see p. 1). In the same year—1748—he left Westminster and remained under his father's roof for nine months. He was then articled for three years to a solicitor—a Mr. Chapman, of Ely Place, Holborn. It was settled that while he was there he should visit every Sunday an uncle of his—Mr. Ashley Cowper, afterwards clerk of the Parliament, who resided in Southampton Row. His fellow clerk at Mr. Chapman's—Edward Thurlow—destined to become hereafter (as Cowper often jestingly prophesied) Lord Chancellor—shared this privilege with him, and not only Sundays but much of the two lads' time was spent at Mr. Ashley Cowper's, whose house was the more attractive probably from the fact that he had three daughters, two of whom, Harriet and Theodora, were growing into womanhood. With the latter Cowper fell deeply in love, and it was to her, under the name of "Delia," that his early poems are addressed. Harriet became engaged to and finally married Mr. Hesketh, who was afterwards created a baronet.

When his three years with the solicitor expired, Cowper entered into residence at the Middle Temple, 1752, and here the first shadow of that awful melancholy which clouded all his future life stole over him. He became painfully depressed. "I was struck," he says, "with such a dejection of spirits, as none but they who have felt the same can have the least conception of. Day and night I was upon the rack, lying down in horror and rising up in despair."

He sought relief in medicine and religion, and found some comfort in George Herbert's works, "but a very near and dear relation," he tells us, disapproved of that excellent divine's teachings, and Herbert—so well suited to his reader!—was unhappily laid aside. Mr. Hesketh, Harriet's lover, then took him to Southampton for change of air and scene, and this appears to have done him good. In 1754 he returned to London and was called to the bar.

It does not appear that he ever had, or desired to have, a brief. He hoped for an appointment to one of the patent offices in connexion with the House of Lords, the nomination to which was vested in a member of his father's family. Meantime he wooed and won his cousin, Theodora Jane Cowper, who was willing to run all risks, and even share poverty with him. "If you marry William Cowper," said her father, alluding to his nephew's poverty one day, "what will you do?" "Do, sir?" answered Theodora, "wash all day, and ride out on the great dog at night."

Probably Mr. Ashley Cowper's hesitation as to permitting the match became a decided objection on account of the sad despondency and restlessness of his nephew. He declared firmly that the marriage must not take place, assigning as an excuse his dislike to cousins marrying. No one, looking at the future which followed, can avoid allowing that Mr. Cowper acted wisely; Cowper's madness, and the excentricity afterwards developed by Theodora, prove that his decision was both wise and kind. Just about this time Cowper was summoned to Berkhamstead to the death-bed of his father, who died of apoplexy soon after his son arrived. He had married a second time, and Cowper had been very little at home

since that event occurred, but he loved the place full of boyish memories, and no doubt grief for his father's death, and the loss of his old home, bitterly aggravated the sorrow of his disappointed affection.

Dr. Cowper did not leave much money to his sons. The younger, John, was then studying at Cambridge for holy orders; and Cowper returned to his lonely chambers, feeling all the more desolate because his uncle Ashley had removed from Southampton Row to Palace Yard, and had taken that opportunity of refusing to permit his nephew to visit at his house. Thus he and Theodora were for ever separated; she submitted dutifully to her father's will, but remained faithful to her love, watching over the life of her cousin with tender interest; helping him with anonymous gifts, and refusing ever to give him a successor in her affections. She carefully preserved the poems he had addressed to her; and near the close of her life deposited them in a sealed packet with her dearest lady-friend, directing that the contents should not be inspected till after her death. Her friend and herself died the same year, 1824, and the executors of the former sent the packet to Mr. James Croft, whose relation, Sir Archer Croft, had married Theodora's youngest sister. He published from this collection a little volume of "Early Poems," in 1825.

The afflictions of Cowper "fell in showers." Next to Theodora he loved young William Russell, who had since their school days succeeded to his hereditary baronetage, and held a commission in the Guards. Suddenly, while bathing in the Thames, that poor young man was drowned.

Cowper's spirits sank under these repeated trials, and his cousin Lady Hesketh, who sometimes saw him, tried to cheer him by playful banter. He answered her in lines of such deep pathos that she never forgot them, but years afterwards, when they had been long lost, could remember, and write them out. Our readers will find them at page 15, under the heading of "Disappointment."

As we have said, Dr. Cowper left but a small provision for his sons; it was therefore a boon to Cowper when his family obtained for him the post of a Commissioner of Bankrupts, which gave him a yearly income of 60*l*. He now bought chambers in the Inner Temple, and renewed his Westminster associations by joining the "Nonsense Club," which consisted of old Westminsters. The president of it was Bonnell Thornton, Hill (who induced him to join it), Lloyd, and Colman. The latter and Thornton edited the *Connoisseur*, to which Cowper soon contributed.

The "Nonsense Club" met and dined together every Thursday, and doubtless the wit and kindly fellowship of his old friends were of infinite benefit to the melancholy young man. His taste for literature was awakened—a taste to which he owed much relief and consolation in his future years.

He contributed five articles (which are known) to the *Connoisseur*, amongst them is one on Conversation—the subject afterwards of one of his best poems. He produced also at this time several halfpenny ballads, two or three of which became popular, but they have been lost, to our great regret. He contributed to the *St. James's Chronicle;* joined his brother in translating two books of Voltaire's *Henriade*, said to have been

published in a magazine; and assisted the Duncombes in a translation of Horace.

But these literary occupations and social pleasures were about to terminate in an awful affliction. Pecuniary difficulties threatened the briefless barrister, and his near relative, Major Cowper, desirous of benefiting him, offered him two vacant offices to which he had the right of presentation—those of Reading Clerk and Clerk of Committees to the House of Lords. The office of Clerk of the Journals of the House of Lords was also vacant, and in Major Cowper's gift; but as it was less lucrative than the two former, he designed it for a friend, a Mr. Arnold, and offered the best to his cousin.

At first Cowper gladly and gratefully accepted the kindness, but almost the next minute repented. Wild fancies seized on him, that he had wished for the death of the former holder, and was therefore at heart a murderer, though he—Mr. De Grey—had resigned and was not dead; he had also a conviction that he could never speak or act in public. After a week's hesitation and mental struggles he begged Major Cowper to give the two lucrative offices to his friend Mr. Arnold, and the less lucrative, but more private one, of Clerk of the Journals, to himself. His cousin, with some hesitation, yielded to his wishes. But a new difficulty arose, a strong party in the House of Lords contested the right of Major Cowper to nominate. Inquiry and discussion followed, and the Clerk of the Journals-elect was informed that he must prepare for an examination at the bar of the House to test his qualifications for the office. "A thunderbolt," he remarks, "would have been as welcome to me as this intelligence."

He was now obliged to visit the office of the House of Lords to learn his future duties, and he tried for more than half a year to prepare for his examination; but in vain! In the autumn of 1763 a visit to Margate revived his sinking spirits for a time, but as soon as he returned to town his reason failed. Three times he attempted suicide; then, sending for Major Cowper, he told him what he had suffered, and returned him his deputation. His brother was sent for and came to him, but could not console or calm him; his cousin, Lady Hesketh, visited him, but he would neither look at nor speak to her. A visit from his cousin, Martin Madan, a strong Calvinistic preacher, served only to increase the agonies of his horror and despair. He wrote the terrible lines

"Hatred and vengeance, my eternal portion,"*

and his distressed friends at length judged it expedient to place him in a lunatic asylum, to which he was removed December, 1763. The asylum was at St. Albans, the proprietor was Dr. Nathaniel Cotton, a man of great professional skill, moral worth, and some literary talent, whose "Visions" were then popular poems.

Under the care of Dr. Cotton, Cowper slowly recovered his reason; but it was not possible (he felt) for him to fulfil any longer conscientiously his duties as a Commissioner of Bankrupts, so the office was resigned. He thus lost nearly all his income, but his family subscribed to make him an annual allowance.

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* See page 27.

His brother was, as we have said, a Fellow of St. Benet's College, Cambridge, and to be near him was now Cowper's great desire. No place, nearer than Huntingdon could, however, be found suited to him. Thither he removed in 1765, attended by a faithful lad who had waited on and watched over him at St. Albans, and who having formed a strong attachment to the poor patient, besought Dr. Cotton to let him go with him. Huntingdon suited Cowper. "I do really think," he wrote, "it the most agreeable neighbourhood I ever saw." He attended the daily services at the church, bathed in the Ouse, walked, and began that correspondence with his friends which has given him a high place in literature, independent of that which he holds as a poet. For three months he lived happily at Huntingdon, then he wearied of solitude, and it was to be feared that he would have suffered from a renewal of his malady had he not happily made the acquaintance of the Unwins, the family of a clergyman who took pupils in Huntingdon. Mr. Unwin had formerly been master of the Huntingdon Grammar School, but had in 1742 received the college living of Grimstone. He then married Mary Cawthorne, a young, pretty, and clever woman, daughter of a draper at Ely. She, however, disliked Grimstone; and to please her Mr. Unwin returned to Huntingdon, where he took a large house in the High Street, and prepared pupils for Cambridge. The Unwins had two children, a son, who at the time Cowper met him, had just taken his A.B. degree at Cambridge, and a daughter of eighteen years of age. Cowper's constant attendance at the daily services in Huntingdon Church attracted the notice of young William Unwin, and one day, after morning prayers, perceiving the stranger taking a solitary walk under some trees, he approached and addressed him. Cowper returned the greeting kindly, and was persuaded by his new acquaintance to visit his family, with whom the poet was charmed. The acquaintance grew into an intimacy, and finally Cowper persuaded the Unwins to let him board with them. This arrangement was every way advantageous to him; he was absurdly ignorant of domestic economy and good management, and had spent his twelve months' whole income in one quarter. He was considerably in debt also to Dr. Cotton. The Cowper family generously came to his assistance, and without consulting him agreed to subscribe annually fo. his support, paying the money for his use into the hands of his kind and thoughtful friend, Hill. At the same time they remonstrated with him through his uncle Ashley on his imprudence in retaining the servant lad he had brought from St. Albans, and also a destitute child, the offspring of profligate parents, which he had adopted and put to school; Cowper refused to abandon his protegés, however, and was threatened with the withdrawal of part of his income. At this stage of the correspondence he received an anonymous letter, it is believed, from Theodora, telling him that the writer approved of his conduct, and promised that if any part of his income were withdrawn the defect should be supplied "by a person who loved him tenderly."

While the correspondence on this subject was going on, his new friends also manifested great generosity. Mrs. Unwin assured him that if the threatened reduction were made he should still share their home, and

enjoy the same accommodation for half the sum previously agreed on between them. Nothing, however, came of his friends' remonstrances; they did *not* withdraw their assistance, and Cowper spent a happy year and a half with his new friends. He has given the following details of his daily life during this period:—"We breakfast commonly between eight and nine; till eleven, we read either the Scriptures, or the sermons of some faithful preacher of those holy mysteries; at eleven, we attend divine service, which is performed here twice every day; and from twelve to three we separate, and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval I either read in my own apartment, or walk or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but, if the weather permits, adjourn to the garden, where, with Mrs. Unwin and her son, I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. If it rains, or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors, or sing some hymns of Martin's collection, and by the help of Mrs. Unwin's harpsichord make up a tolerable concert, in which our hearts, I hope, are the best and most musical performers. After tea, we sally forth to walk in good earnest. Mrs. Unwin is a good walker, and we have generally travelled about four miles before we see home again. When the days are short we make this excursion in the former part of the day, between church-time and dinner. At night, we read and converse as before till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns or a sermon, and last of all the family are called to prayers. I need not tell *you* that such a life as this is consistent with the utmost cheerfulness; accordingly we are all happy, and dwell together in unity as brethren."

During this period young Unwin left home to take a curacy, and his sister married the Rev. Matthew Powley, afterwards Vicar of Dewsbury. A more serious change was coming. On the 28th of June, 1767, Mr. Unwin was thrown from his horse, his skull was fractured, and he died four days afterwards.

Mr. Unwin had expressed a wish that if his wife survived him, Cowper might still dwell with her; therefore the two mourners resolved not to separate, and the Rev. John Newton (having just at that time been introduced to Mrs. Unwin by Dr. Conyers, of Helmsley) invited them to reside in his own parish, and offered to find a house for them. In consequence they removed to Olney on the 14th of September, 1767, but as their own house was not ready, Newton received them for a time as his guests at the Vicarage.

From this moment Cowper became the friend and assistant of the energetic curate, who devoted his life to his flock. Olney lies on the Ouse, in the north of Buckinghamshire. Owing to frequent overflowings of the river, the place was cold, damp, and aguish. The people were wretchedly poor, subsisting by lace-making and straw plaiting, and no educated person resided in the town except Mr. Newton, the curate. No place less favourable to poor Cowper's health of mind and body could have been found, but for a time all went well. Inspired by the enthusiasm of the ardent evangelical clergyman, he visited, read, and prayed with the sick, he attended prayer-meetings, and even himself

conducted the extempore prayer—a terrible effort for so shy a man. His exercise was also lost, for they had "sermon, or lecture, every evening which lasted till supper-time." A great contrast to the peace and holy repose of the daily life whose details we gave on the last page.

This great religious excitement was followed by its inevitable reaction. Melancholy again seized on Cowper, as his desponding letters prove, and a real grief came to wound his affectionate heart in 1770, when he was called to attend the death-bed of his beloved brother John, who died at Cambridge.

In 1771, Cowper, at Mr. Newton's suggestion, began the Olney Hymns, but before the composition had advanced far he became a second time insane.

"I was suddenly reduced," he remarked, writing in 1786, "from my wonted rate of understanding to an almost childish imbecility. I did not lose my senses, but I lost the power to exercise them. I could return a rational answer even to a difficult question, but a question was necessary, or I never spoke at all. This state of mind was accompanied, as I suppose it to be in most instances of the kind, with misapprehension of things and persons, that made me a very intractable patient. I believed that everybody hated me, and that Mrs. Unwin hated me most of all; was convinced that all my food was poisoned, together with ten thousand megrims of the same stamp."

This affliction was the more terrible because he was at that time about to be married to Mrs. Unwin.* This fact, long doubted, is now well known. It was naturally to be expected that such a result would follow the closeness of their intimacy, and the similarity of their tastes and opinions. Cowper's madness took a most painful turn with regard to religion. The Calvinistic doctrine of the need of "assurance of salvation," was a peculiarly painful and dangerous one for his mind. His first illness had been one full of despair of his own salvation; the same terrible impression now overwhelmed him.

He believed that God required him to sacrifice his own life, and several times attempted suicide. He refused to pray, or to attend Divine service, nor would he visit the rectory, till one day having been induced to go there, he refused to leave it, and besought Newton with tears of anguish to let him remain. The generous curate consented, though the expense of the poor lunatic's living fell heavily on him; but Newton† was assisted in all his good works by one of the most liberal and benevolent

* *Vide* Mr. Bull's memorials of Cowper, in "John Newton."

† The Rev. John Newton had been a sailor—a wild, dissipated one—and had been flogged for desertion. He had suffered horribly on a slave plantation in Sierra Leone, and was shipwrecked on his return. This event completely changed him. He styled it his "Great Deliverance," and from that time became an enthusiastic Calvinist; afterwards he commanded a slave-ship; then he became a tide-surveyor at Liverpool, where he became acquainted with Whitefield and Wesley, and in 1764 he entered the Church, being ordained to the curacy of Olney. The same year he became acquainted with Thornton, who continued his staunch, never-changing friend, perceiving how much good there was in him.

of men, Mr. Thornton, who had long allowed him 200*l.* a year to spend in Christian hospitality, and on his poor.

Newton treated his unhappy guest with great affection, and hailed with delight the first smile of the melancholy man.

Then he proposed that Cowper should return to his own home, and the patient eagerly consented.

During the whole period of his derangement Mrs. Unwin had manifested the most affectionate devotion to him. Her watchful care had preserved him from self-destruction, and day and night she had watched over him till he went to Newton's. Even then her tender care was continued for him, and on his return to her house she shared her small income with him, and did all that was possible to cheer and sustain him.

Gradually he grew better; occupied himself with gardening and carpentering, and amused himself with petting animals. He had, besides his three famous hares, five rabbits, two guinea-pigs, two dogs, a magpie, a jay, and other birds.

In September, 1779, Mr. Thornton presented Newton with the living of St. Mary Woolnoth, and the friends were separated; before Newton left he introduced Cowper to a Mr. Bull, an Independent preacher, who resided at Newport Pagnell, five miles from Olney

And now by degrees Cowper resumed his correspondence and began occasionally to write short poems. About this time his cousin, Mr. Madan, chaplain of the Lock Hospital, published a treatise called "Thelyphthora, or a Treatise on Marriage," recommending polygamy! and asserting that it was sanctioned by God Himself in the Holy Scriptures. Cowper and Newton were both greatly shocked by this development of Mr. Madan's views, and the former wrote, in answer to it, his little known, and very inferior poem, *Antithelyphthora*, which *as his* is inserted in this edition, but is quite unworthy of a place with his generally charming poems. It was published anonymously, 1781, and he never included it in his works himself.

To Mrs. Unwin posterity is obliged for suggesting to him a worthier theme, and urging him to far superior endeavours. She suggested the "Progress of Error," a moral satire, and Cowper at once began, and continued it enthusiastically. Then he wrote "Truth, "Table Talk," and "Expostulation," all these poems being completed in three months. He requested Newton to find him a publisher, and Newton carried the MSS. to John Johnson, his own publisher, who accepted them, and took all the risk; but he suggested that the book would require *to be larger*, and Cowper, at his request, wrote two more poems, "Hope," and "Charity." While the work was in the press he wrote "Conversation," and "Retirement." He requested Newton to write a preface, but the publisher refused to print it, as too serious in tone; it was, however, inserted in the fifth edition.

When the volume of poems had issued from the press, Cowper sent copies to his former old friends and schoolfellows, Lord Thurlow—now, as he had prophesied, Lord Chancellor—and Colman; but neither of them acknowledged the receipt of the gift, and some months after the poet,

very indignant at their unkind neglect, wrote the "Valediction." The book was not popular, and did not sell; it was destined to wait for its successor.

A new acquaintance came to brighten Cowper's life, and inspire his Muse in 1781. While he was correcting the press of his first volume of poems, he observed from his window two ladies shopping at Olney in the heat of a summer afternoon. With one of them he was slightly acquainted; she was a Mrs. Jones, the wife of a clergyman residing at Clifton Reynes, about a mile from Olney; but the lady who was with her was so distinguished-looking, that she immediately attracted Cowper's notice. He heard that she was sister to Mrs. Jones, and the widow of a baronet, and he requested that Mrs. Unwin would ask them in to tea. The hospitality was gladly accepted—the ladies came, and though, afterwards, the poet was shy and reluctant to go into the room where they were, he was no sooner introduced to Lady Austen, than he was captivated by her grace and wit, and from this period began an intimacy to which we owe "Johnny Gilpin" and the "Task."

One day, when Cowper was suffering from one of his fits of depression, his charming friend told him the story of "Johnny Gilpin," which actually kept him awake at night with convulsions of laughter, and which he the next morning turned into a ballad. It was sent to William Unwin, and printed soon after in the *Public Advertiser.* Three years afterwards Mr. Sharp saw it, and recommended it to Henderson, the actor, for "a reading." He perceived its capabilities—read it, and enchanted his audience, amongst whom was Mrs. Siddons.

Lady Austen then entreated Cowper to try his power at writing blank verse, and gave him for a subject the "Sofa" on which she was sitting. He accepted the suggestion, and began his great poem; but before it was finished his friendship with Lady Austen ended. Once before there had been coolness and estrangement, caused by some dissension between the ladies. Now the same cause led, it is believed, to this sad result for Cowper—for the friendship of this brilliant woman had been a source of mental health to him. That he sacrificed it to his gratitude to Mrs. Unwin for her former devotion we can have little doubt. We should have been glad if she had nobly forgotten self in this instance, and sought only the good of her friend. Hayley gives the following account of this circumstance:—

"Cowper perceived the painful necessity of sacrificing a great portion of his present gratifications. He felt that he must relinquish that ancient friend, whom he regarded as a venerable parent; or the new associate, whom he idolised as a sister, of a heart and mind peculiarly congenial to his own. His gratitude for past services of unexampled magnitude and weight would not allow him to hesitate; with a resolution and delicacy, that do the highest honour to his feelings, he wrote a farewell letter to Lady Austen, explaining and lamenting the circumstances that forced him to renounce the society of a friend, whose enchanting talents and kindness had proved so agreeably instrumental to the revival of his spirits, and to the exercise of his fancy.

"In those very interesting conferences with which I was honoured by Lady Austen, I was irresistibly led to express an anxious desire for the sight of a letter written by Cowper in a situation that must have called forth all the finest powers of his eloquence as a monitor and a friend. The lady confirmed me in my opinion, that a more admirable letter could not be written; and had it existed at that time, I am persuaded, from her noble frankness and zeal for the honour of the departed poet, she would have given me a copy; but she ingenuously confessed that in a moment of natural mortification, she burnt this very tender, yet resolute letter. I mention the circumstance, because a literary correspondent, whom I have great reason to esteem, has recently expressed to me a wish (which may perhaps be general) that I could introduce into this compilation the letter in question. Had it been confided to my care, I am persuaded I should have thought it very proper for publication, as it displayed both the tenderness and the magnanimity of Cowper; nor could I have deemed it a want of delicacy towards the memory of Lady Austen to exhibit a proof that, animated by the warmest admiration of the great poet, whose fancy she could so successfully call forth, she was willing to devote her life and fortune to his service and protection. The sentiment is to be regarded as honourable to the lady; it is still more honourable to the poet, that with such feelings as rendered him perfectly sensible of all Lady Austen's fascinating powers, he could return her tenderness with innocent gallantry, and yet resolutely preclude himself from her society, when he could no longer enjoy it without appearing deficient in gratitude towards the compassionate and generous guardian of his sequestered life." Lady Austen afterwards married a Frenchman, M. de Tardieu.

About the time of Cowper's separation from Lady Austen he made the acquaintance of the Throckmortons, a family residing at Weston Underwood, a village about two miles from Olney.

The "Task" was published by Johnson, who, in spite of the failure of the poet's first production, recognised and believed in his genius; but as it was again insufficient for a volume, the "Tirocinium," "John Gilpin," and an Epistle to his excellent friend Hill, were added. The new poems were published June, 1785, and the author was at once acknowledged as the first poet of the age. It was the already famous "John Gilpin" at first which attracted readers; then the excellence of the serious poems confirmed their admiration of the comic writer. The book rapidly passed into a second edition, and next year the two volumes were published together.

His success as a poet revived his relations with his family, who had been for some time estranged from him; and Cowper was in wild delight when at last he received a letter from Lady Hesketh—the first received for nineteen years! His friends—his old schoolfellows—all were won back by his genius; those who had shrunk from the (supposed) gloomy fanatic returned ardently to the Christian poet.

He rejoiced in this new sunshine of life, and frankly accepted their kindnesses and their renewed affection. He received at this period an anonymous letter, advising him not to overwork himself, and announcing the intention of sending him *50l.* a year.

There is no doubt it came from his faithful cousin Theodora. He probably knew it did, as he told his cousin Harriet (Lady Hesketh) that he would not seek to penetrate the secret. He thus speaks of his relatives' kindness in a letter to Unwin, dated July 10, 1786 :—

"Within this twelvemonth my income has received an addition of a clear 100*l*. per annum. For a considerable part of it I am indebted to my dear cousin (Lady Hesketh) now on the other side of the Orchard. At Florence she obtained me 20*l*. a year from Lord Cowper; since he came home she has recommended me with such good effect to his notice that he has added twenty more; twenty she has added herself, and ten she has procured me from the William of my name whom you saw at Hertingfordbury. From my anonymous friend who insists on not being known or guessed at, and never shall by me, I have an annuity of 50*l*. All these sums have accrued within this year, except the first, making together, as you perceive, an exact century of pounds annually poured into the replenished purse of your once poor poet of Olney."

He began now to find Olney dull, and urged by Lady Hesketh, left it and proceeded to a house at Weston-Underwood belonging to Mr. Throckmorton. A fortnight after they had entered their new residence a terrible grief once more broke in on the returning happiness of the poet. Poor William Unwin died of typhus fever. He had been the dearest of Cowper's friends, and the mother's loss called also on his sympathy. But Mrs. Unwin bore sorrow calmly, and Cowper was in a short time restored to composure, and laboured at his task of translating Homer, which he had begun twelve months before.

Another short attack of insanity in which he again attempted self-destruction occurred, but he recovered in about the space of eight months. After this illness he made a singular acknowledgment to Newton in one of his letters, that he had for *thirteen years doubted Newton's identity*, a fact which accounted for any apparent coolness to his former friend.

In January, 1790, a relative on his mother's side sought out the poet, and Cowper warmly welcomed his cousin John Johnson, to whom he was destined to owe the chief comfort of his last days. This young man, a Cambridge undergraduate, was the grandson of the Rev. Roger Donne, of Catfield, in Norfolk, Cowper's mother's brother.

On his return to his kindred in Norfolk, John Johnson was full of his love and admiration for Cowper; and on telling his aunt, Mrs. Bodham, that she was still affectionately remembered by her old playfellow and cousin, she wrote to the poet and sent him the picture of his mother, which inspired the beautiful elegy so universally popular.

Cowper had just previously gained a new friend in Mr. Rose; he also began a correspondence with a Mrs. King, and renewed his old acquaintance with Lord Thurlow. His translation of Homer was published in 1791. Johnson gave him 1000*l*. for it, the copyright remaining with Cowper. His publisher next invited him to undertake an edition of Milton, to match Boydell's Shakespeare. He was to translate Milton's Latin and Italian poems, and add notes. Fuseli was to illustrate the work. But this task proved very painful and distasteful to him.

In 1791 Mrs. Unwin was seized with paralysis, and the effect on Cowper of her illness, and lengthened recovery from it, was very sad. He began to fancy he heard voices speaking to him when he woke in the morning. Mrs. Unwin's intellect, weakened by her illness, succumbed to the same delusion, and a schoolmaster at Olney, Samuel Teedon, actually undertook to explain the meaning of the imagined sounds to Cowper. This man gained great influence over the unhappy poet, who paid him large sums of money at different times. From this period the life of Cowper became clouded and hopeless. Poor Mrs. Unwin, weak in mind and body, had grown fretful and very exacting. He had no companion now but this suffering, imbecile woman, and the equally mad or knavish schoolmaster, Lady Hesketh being at Bath for her health. When she returned she was so shocked and alarmed, that she wrote at once for Mr. Hayley (a friend whom Cowper had lately made in consequence of their being *both* employed—of course, by different publishers—on an edition of Milton), begging him to come at once to Olney. He complied. They induced the celebrated Dr. Willis to see Cowper, but he could do nothing for the now restless madman.

A pension of 300*l.* a year was granted to the poet by the king, but he was incapable of understanding his good fortune. Dr. Willis had suggested change of air and scene, and clinging to this last hope, Mr. Johnson succeeded in persuading him to go (with Mrs. Unwin) to North Tuddenham, then to Mundesley, on the coast, and finally to Dunham Lodge, near Swaffham. Here Mrs. Unwin died. Cowper was taken to see her. He uttered an exclamation of sorrow and left the room, but became quite calm directly afterwards, and suffered Johnson to resume the reading which had lately been their only means of pleasing him—that of Miss Burney's novels.

After the death of Mrs. Unwin, Cowper had glimpses of reason. In March, 1799, he continued his revision of his Homer, wrote the Latin poem, "Montes Glaciales," and a few days afterwards "The Castaway." He liked being read to, and would listen to his own poems, except to "John Gilpin," which he disliked.

An excellent woman, Miss Perowne, had in a degree taken Mrs. Unwin's former place beside him, and assisted the loving efforts of his kinsman to cheer and help him. But care and love were alike vain.

In the helpless gloom of melancholy madness his life closed. He died April 25, 1800.

"From that moment" (of his death), says his kinsman, "until the coffin was closed, the expression into which his countenance had settled was that of calmness and composure, mingled, as it were, with a holy surprise."

He had emphatically "entered into his rest," and was at peace. He was buried in Dereham Church, in St. Edmund's Chapel. Mrs. Unwin lies in the south aisle.

THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER.

Early Poems.

VERSES WRITTEN AT BATH,

ON FINDING THE HEEL OF A SHOE, IN 1748.

FORTUNE! I thank thee: gentle goddess, thanks!
Not that my Muse, though bashful, shall deny
She would have thank'd thee rather, hadst thou cast
A treasure in her way; for neither meed
Of early breakfast, to dispel the fumes
And bowel-raking pains of emptiness,
Nor noontide feast, nor evening's cool repast,
Hopes she from this, presumptuous—though perhaps
The cobbler, leather-carving artist, might.
Nathless she thanks thee, and accepts thy boon,
Whatever; not as erst the fabled cock,
Vain-glorious fool, unknowing what he found,
Spurn'd the rich gem thou gavest him. Wherefore ah!
Why not on me that favour (worthier sure!)
Conferr'dst thou, goddess? Thou art blind, thou sayest:
Enough!—thy blindness shall excuse the deed.
Nor does my Muse no benefit exhale
From this thy scant indulgence;—even here,
Hints, worthy sage philosophy, are found,
Illustrious hints to moralize my song.
This ponderous Heel of perforated hide
Compact, with pegs indented many a row,
Haply, (for such its massy form bespeaks,)
The weighty tread of some rude peasant clown
Upbore: on this supported oft he stretch'd,
With uncouth strides, along the furrow'd glebe,

OF HIMSELF.

Flattening the stubborn clod, till cruel time
(What will not cruel time?) on awry step,
Sever'd the strict cohesion; when, alas!
He, who could erst with even equal pace,
Pursue his destined way with symmetry
And some proportion form'd, now, on one side,
Curtail'd and maim'd, the sport of vagrant boys,
Cursing his frail supporter, treacherous prop!
With toilsome steps, and difficult, moves on.
Thus fares it oft with other than the feet
Of humble villager:—the statesman thus,
Up the steep road where proud ambition leads,
Aspiring, first uninterrupted winds
His prosperous way; nor fears miscarriage foul,
While policy prevails and friends prove true:
But that support soon failing, by him left
On whom he most depended,—basely left,
Betray'd, deserted,—from his airy height
Headlong he falls, and through the rest of life
Drags the dull load of disappointment on.

OF HIMSELF.

William was once a bashful youth;
His modesty was such,
That one might say (to say the truth),
He rather had too much.

Some said that it was want of sense,
And others, want of spirit
(So blest a thing is impudence),
While others could not bear it.

But some a different notion had,
And at each other winking,
Observed that though he little said,
He paid it off with thinking.

Howe'er, it happened, by degrees,
He mended and grew perter;
In company was more at ease,
And dressed a little smarter;

Nay, now and then would look quite gay,
As other people do;
And sometimes said, or tried to say,
A witty thing or so.

AN APOLOGY.

He eyed the women, and made free
  To comment on their shapes;
So that there was, or seemed to be
  No fear of a relapse.

The women said, who thought him rough,
  But now no longer foolish,
"The creature may do well enough,
  "But wants a deal of polish."

At length, improved from head to heel,
  'Twere scarce too much to say,
No dancing bear was so genteel,
  Or half so *dégagé.*

Now that a miracle so strange
  May not in vain be shown
Let the dear maid* who wrought the change
  E'en claim him for her own.

POEMS TO DELIA.

Catfield,† July, 1752.

AN APOLOGY FOR NOT SHOWING HER WHAT I HAD WROTE.

Did not my Muse (what can she less?)
Perceive her own unworthiness,
Could she by some well-chosen theme,
But hope to merit your esteem,
She would not thus conceal her lays,
Ambitious to deserve your praise.
But should my Delia take offence,
And frown on her impertinence,
In silence, sorrowing and forlorn,
Would the despairing trifler mourn,
Curse her ill-tuned, unpleasing lute,
Then sigh and sit for ever mute.
In secret therefore let her play,
Squandering her idle notes away,
In secret as she chants along,
Cheerful and careless in her song;

* His cousin, Theodora Cowper.

† "Cutfield;" Ed. 1825, probably "Catfield," the parish in Norfolk of which Cowper's maternal uncle, the Rev. Roger Donne, was rector. The Delia of the Poet was his cousin, Theodora Jane Cowper, to whom he was much attached. His love was returned, but her father, Mr. Ashley Cowper, refused to consent to their union. "Delia" died unmarried in 1824.

Nor heeds she whether harsh or clear,
Free from each terror, every fear,
From that, of all most dreaded, free,
The terror of offending thee.

APOLOGY TO DELIA,

FOR DESIRING A LOCK OF HER HAIR.

Delia, the unkindest girl on earth,
When I besought the fair.
That favour of intrinsic worth
A ringlet of her hair,

Refused that instant to comply
With my absurd request,
For reasons she could specify,
Some twenty score at least.

Trust me, my dear, however odd
It may appear to say,
I sought it merely to defraud
Thy spoiler of his prey.

Yes! when its sister locks shall fade,
As quickly fade they must,
When all their beauties are decayed,
Their gloss, their colour, lost—

Ah then! if haply to my share
Some slender pittance fall,
If I but gain one single hair,
Nor age usurp them all;—

When you behold it still as sleek,
As lovely to the view,
As when it left thy snowy neck,
That Eden where it grew,

Then shall my Delia's self declare
That I professed the truth,
And have preserved my little share
In everlasting youth.

At the same place.

THE SYMPTOMS OF LOVE.

WOULD my Delia know if I love, let her take
My last thought at night, and the first when I wake;
When my prayers and best wishes preferr'd for her sake

Let her guess what I muse on, when rambling alone
I stride o'er the stubble each day with my gun,
Never ready to shoot till the covey is flown.

Let her think what odd whimsies I have in my brain,
When I read one page over and over again,
And discover at last that I read it in vain.

Let her say why so fix'd and so steady my look,
Without ever regarding the person who spoke,
Still affecting to laugh, without hearing the joke.

Or why, when with pleasure her praises I hear,
(That sweetest of melody sure to my ear,)
I attend, and at once inattentive appear.

And lastly, when summon'd to drink to my flame,
Let her guess why I never once mention her name,
Though herself and the woman I love are the same.

AN ATTEMPT AT THE MANNER OF WALLER.

DID not thy reason and thy sense,
With most persuasive eloquence,
Convince me that obedience due,
None may so justly claim as you,
By right of beauty you would be
Mistress o'er my heart and me.

Then fear not I should e'er rebel
My gentle love! I might as well
A froward peevishness put on,
And quarrel with the mid-day sun;
Or question who gave him a right
To be so fiery and so bright.

Nay, this were less absurd and vain
Than disobedience to thy reign;
His beams are often too severe;
But thou art mild, as thou art fair;
First from necessity we own your sway,
Then scorn our freedom, and by choice obey.

Drayton, March, 1753.

WRITTEN IN A QUARREL.

(THE DELIVERY OF IT PREVENTED BY A RECONCILIATION.)

THINK, Delia, with what cruel haste
Our fleeting pleasures move,
Nor heedless thus in sorrow waste
The moments due to love;

Be wise, my fair, and gently treat
These few that are our friends;
Think thus abused, what sad regret
Their speedy flight attends!

Sure in those eyes I loved so well,
And wish'd so long to see,
Anger I thought could never dwell,
Or anger aim'd at me.

No bold offence of mine I knew
Should e'er provoke your hate;
And, early taught to think you true
Still hoped a gentler fate.

With kindness bless the present hour,
Or oh! we meet in vain!
What can we do in absence more
Than suffer and complain?

Fated to ills beyond redress,
We must endure our woe;
The days allow'd us to possess,
'Tis madness to forego.

RECONCILIATION.

THIS evening, Delia, you and I
Have managed most delightfully,
For with a frown we parted;
Having contrived some trifle that
We both may be much troubled at,
And sadly disconcerted.

Yet well as each performed their part,
We might perceive it was but art;

And that we both intended
To sacrifice a little ease;
For all such petty flaws as these
Are made but to be mended.

You knew, dissembler! all the while,
How sweet it was to reconcile
After this heavy pelt;
That we should gain by this allay
When next we met, and laugh away
The care we never felt.

Happy! when we but seek to endure
A little pain, then find a cure
By double joy requited;
For friendship, like a severed bone,
Improves and gains a stronger tone
When aptly reunited.

At Cutfield.

APPEAL TO DELIA FOR FORGIVENESS.

See where the Thames, the purest stream
That wavers to the noonday beam,
Divides the vale below;
While like a vein of liquid ore
His waves enrich the happy shore,
Still shining as they flow.

Nor yet, my Delia, to the main
Runs the sweet tide without a stain,
Unsullied as it seems;
The Nymphs of many a sable flood
Deform with streaks of oozy mud
The bosom of the Thames.

Some idle rivulets, that feed
And suckle every noisome weed,
A sandy bottom boast;
For ever bright, for ever clear
The trifling shallow rills appear
In their own channel lost.

Thus fares it with the human soul,
Where copious floods of passion roll,
By genuine love supplied;
Fair in itself the current shows,
But ah! a thousand anxious woes
Pollute the noble tide.

These are emotions known to few;
For where at most a vapoury dew
Surrounds the tranquil heart,
Then as the triflers never prove
The glad excess of real love,
They never prove the smart.

Oh then, my life, at last relent!
Though cruel the reproach I sent,
My sorrow was unfeigned:
Your passion, had I loved you not,
You might have scorned, renounced, forgot,
And I had ne'er complained.

While you indulge a groundless fear,
The imaginary woes you bear,
Are real woes to me:
But thou art kind, and good thou art,
Nor wilt, by wronging thine own heart,
Unjustly punish me.

TO DELIA.

HIS HAPPINESS DEPENDS ON DELIA'S FAVOUR, NOT ON THE GIFTS OF FORTUNE.

How blessed the youth whom Fate ordains
A kind relief from all his pains,
In some admired fair;
Whose tenderest wishes find expressed
Their own resemblance in her breast,
Exactly copied there!

What good soe'er the gods dispense,
The enjoyment of its influence
Still on her love depends;
Her love the shield that guards his heart,
Or wards the blow, or blunts the dart,
That peevish Fortune sends.

Thus, Delia, while thy love endures,
The flame my happy breast secures
From Fortune's fickle power;
Change as she list, she may increase,
But not abate my happiness,
Confirm'd by thee before.

DELIA'S ABSENCE.

Thus while I share her smiles with thee,
Welcome, my love, shall ever be
  The favours she bestows;
Yet not on those I found my bliss,
But in the noble ecstasies
  The faithful bosom knows.

And when she prunes her wings for flight,
And flutters nimbly from my sight,
  Contented I resign
Whate'er she gave; thy love alone
I can securely call my own,
  Happy while that is mine.

DELIA'S ABSENCE.

Bid adieu, my sad heart, bid adieu to thy peace!
Thy pleasure is past, and thy sorrows increase;
See the shadows of evening how far they extend,
And a long night is coming, that never may end;
For the sun is now set that enliven'd the scene,
And an age must be past ere it rises again.

Already deprived of its splendour and heat,
I feel thee more slowly, more heavily beat;
Perhaps, overstrain'd with the quick pulse of pleasure,
Thou art glad of this respite to beat at thy leisure;
But the sigh of distress shall now weary thee more
Than the flutter and tumult of passion before.

The heart of a lover is never at rest,
With joy overwhelm'd, or with sorrow oppress'd:
When Delia is near, all is ecstasy then,
And I even forget I must lose her again:
When absent, as wretched as happy before,
Despairing I cry, "I shall see her no more!"

Berkhampstead.

WRITTEN AFTER LEAVING HER AT NEW BURNS.

How quick the change from joy to woe!
How chequered is our lot below!
Seldom we view the prospect fair,
Dark clouds of sorrow, pain, and care.

(Some pleasing intervals between,)
Scowl over more than half the scene.
Last night with Delia, gentle maid,
Far hence in happier fields I strayed,
While on her dear enchanting tongue
Soft sounds of grateful welcome hung,
For absence had withheld it long.
"Welcome, my long-lost love," she said,
"E'er since our adverse fates decreed
"That we must part, and I must mourn
"Till once more blessed by thy return,
"Love, on whose influence I relied
"For all the transports I enjoyed,
"Has played the cruel tyrant's part
"And turned tormentor to my heart.
"But let me hold thee to my breast,
"Dear partner of my joy and rest,
"And not a pain, and not a fear,
"Or anxious doubt shall enter there."
Happy, thought I, the favoured youth,
Blessed with such undissembled truth!
Five suns successive rose and set,
And saw no monarch in his state,
Wrapped in the blaze of majesty,
So free from every care as I.

Next day the scene was overcast;
Such day till then I never passed,
For on that day, relentless fate!
Delia and I must separate.
Yet ere we looked our last farewell,
From her dear lips this comfort fell:
"Fear not that time, where'er we rove,
"Or absence shall abate my love."
And can I doubt, my charming maid,
As unsincere what you have said?
Banished from thee to what I hate,
Dull neighbours and insipid chat,
No joy to cheer me, none in view,
But the dear hope of meeting you;
And that through passion's optic scene,
With ages interposed between;
Blessed with the kind support you give,
'Tis by your promised truth I live;
How deep my woes, how fierce my flame,
You best may tell, who feel the same.

At Berkhampstead.

ON HER ENDEAVOURING TO CONCEAL HER GRIEF AT PARTING.

Ah! wherefore should my weeping maid suppress
Those gentle signs of undissembled woe?
When from soft love proceeds the deep distress,
Ah! why forbid the willing tears to flow?

Since for my sake each dear translucent drop
Breaks forth, best witness of thy truth sincere,
My lips should drink the precious mixture up,
And, ere it falls, receive the trembling tear.

Trust me, these symptoms of thy faithful heart,
In absence shall my dearest hope sustain;
Delia! since such thy sorrow that we part,
Such when we meet thy joy shall be again.

Hard is that heart, and unsubdued by love
That feels no pain, nor ever heaves a sigh;
Such hearts the fiercest passions only prove,
Or freeze in cold insensibility.

Oh! then indulge thy grief, nor fear to tell,
The gentle source from whence thy sorrows flow
Nor think it weakness when we love to feel,
Nor think it weakness what we feel to show.

DESPAIR AT HIS SEPARATION FROM DELIA.

Hope, like the short-lived ray that gleams awhile
Through wintry skies, upon the frozen waste,
Cheers e'en the face of misery to a smile;
But soon the momentary pleasure's past.

How oft, my Delia, since our last farewell,
(Years that have rolled since that distressful hour!)
Grieved I have said, when most our hopes prevail,
Our promised happiness is least secure.

Oft I have thought the scene of troubles closed,
And hoped once more to gaze upon your charms;
As oft some dire mischance has interposed,
And snatched the expected blessing from my arms.

R. S. S.

The seaman thus, his shattered vessel lost,
Still vainly strives to shun the threatening death;
And while he thinks to gain the friendly coast,
And drops his feet, and feels the sands beneath,

Borne by the wave steep-sloping from the shore,
Back to the inclement deep, again he beats
The surge aside, and seems to tread secure;
And now the refluent wave his baffled toil defeats.

Had you, my love, forbade me to pursue
My fond attempt, disdainfully retired,
And with proud scorn compelled me to subdue
The ill-fated passion by yourself inspired;

Then haply to some distant spot removed,
Hopeless to gain, unwilling to molest
With fond entreaties whom I dearly loved,
Despair or absence had redeemed my rest.

But now, sole partner in my Delia's heart,
Yet doomed far off in exile to complain,
Eternal absence cannot ease my smart,
And hope subsists but to prolong my pain.

Oh then, kind Heaven, be this my latest breath!
Here end my life, or make it worth my care;
Absence from whom we love is worse than death,
And frustrate hope severer than despair.

R. S. S.

All-worshipped Gold! Thou mighty mystery!
Say by what name shall I address thee rather,
Our blessing, or our bane? Without thy aid,
The generous pangs of pity but distress
The human heart, that fain would feel the bliss
Of blessing others; and enslaved by thee,
Far from relieving woes which others feel,
Misers oppress themselves. Our blessing then,
With virtue when possessed; without, our bane!
If in my bosom unperceived there lurk
The deep-sown seeds of avarice or ambition,
Blame me, ye great ones, (for I scorn your censure)
But let the generous and the good commend me,
That to my Delia I direct them all,
The worthiest object of a virtuousl ove.
Oh! to some distant scene, a willing exile

From the wild uproar of this busy world,
Were it my fate with Delia to retire;
With her to wander through the sylvan shade,
Each morn, or o'er the moss imbrowned turf,
Where, blessed as the prime parents of mankind
In their own Eden, we would envy none;
But, greatly pitying whom the world calls happy,
Gently spin out the silken thread of life;
While from her lips attentive I receive
The tenderest dictates of the purest flame,
And from her eyes (where soft complacence sits
Illumined with the radiant beams of sense,)
Tranquillity beyond a monarch's reach.
Forgive me, Heaven, this only avarice
My soul indulges; I confess the crime,
(If to esteem, to covet such perfection
Be criminal,) oh grant me, Delia! grant me wealth!
Wealth to alleviate, not increase my wants;
And grant me virtue, without which nor wealth
Nor Delia can avail to make me blessed.

WRITTEN IN A FIT OF ILLNESS.

R. S. S.

In these sad hours, a prey to ceaseless pain,
While feverish pulses leap in every vein,
When each faint breath the last short effort seems
Of life just parting from my feeble limbs;
How wild soe'er my wandering thoughts may be,
Still, gentle Delia, still they turn on thee!
At length if, slumbering to a short repose,
A sweet oblivion frees me from my woes,
Thy form appears, thy footsteps I pursue,
Through springy vales, and meadows washed in dew;
Thy arm supports me to the fountain's brink,
Where by some secret power forbid to drink,
Gasping with thirst, I view the tempting flood
That flies my touch, or thickens into mud;
Till thine own hand immerged the goblet dips,
And bears it streaming to my burning lips.
There borne aloft on Fancy's wing we fly,
Like souls embodied to their native sky;
Now every rock, each mountain, disappears;
And the round earth an even surface wears;
When lo! the force of some resistless weight
Bears me straight down from that pernicious height;

TO DELIA.

Parting, in vain our struggling arms we close;
Abhorred forms, dire-phantoms interpose;
With trembling voice on thy loved name I call;
And gulfs yawn ready to receive my fall.
From these fallacious visions of distress
I wake; nor are my real sorrows less.
Thy absence, Delia, heightens every ill,
And gives e'en trivial pains the power to kill.
Oh! wert thou near me; yet that wish forbear!
'Twere vain, my love,—'twere vain to wish me near;
Thy tender heart would heave with anguish too,
And by partaking, but increase my woe.
Alone I'll grieve, till gloomy sorrow past,
Health, like the cheerful day-spring, comes at last,—
Comes fraught with bliss to banish every pain,
Hope, joy, and peace, and Delia in her train!

TO DELIA.

1755.

Me to whatever state the gods assign,
Believe, my love, whatever state be mine,
Ne'er shall my breast one anxious sorrow know,
Ne'er shall my heart confess a real woe;
If to thy share Heaven's choicest blessings fall,
As thou hast virtue to deserve them all;
Yet vain, alas! that idle hope would be
That builds on happiness remote from thee.
Oh! may thy charms, whate'er our fate decrees,
Please, as they must, but let them only please—
Not like the sun with equal influence shine,
Nor warm with transport any heart but mine.
Ye who from wealth the ill-grounded title boast
To claim whatever beauty charms you most;
Ye sons of fortune, who consult alone
Her parents' will, regardless of her own,
Know that a love like ours, a generous flame,
No wealth can purchase, and no power reclaim,
The soul's affection can be only given
Free, unextorted, as the grace of Heaven.
Is there whose faithful bosom can endure
Pangs fierce as mine, nor ever hope a cure?
Who sighs in absence of the dear-loved maid,
Nor summons once Indifference to his aid?

Who can, like me, the nice resentment prove,
The thousand soft disquietudes of love;
The trivial strifes that cause a real pain;
The real bliss when reconciled again?
Let him alone dispute the real prize,
And read his sentence in my Delia's eyes;
There shall he read all gentleness and truth,
But not himself, the dear distinguish'd youth;
Pity for him perhaps they may express—
Pity, that will but heighten his distress.
But, wretched rival! he must sigh to see
The sprightlier rays of love directed all to me.
And thou, dear Antidote of every pain
Which fortune can inflict, or love ordain,
Since early love has taught me to despise
What the world's worthless votaries only prize,
Believe, my love! no less the generous god
Rules in my breast, his ever blest abode;
There has he driven each gross desire away,
Directing every wish and every thought to thee!
Then can I ever leave my Delia's arms,
A slave, devoted to inferior charms?
Can e'er my soul her reason so disgrace?
For what blest minister of heavenly race
Would quit that Heaven to find a happier place?

DISAPPOINTMENT.

[WRITTEN AFTER THE LAST MEETING BETWEEN COWPER AND HIS DELIA.]

Doom'd, as I am, in solitude to waste
The present moments, and regret the past;
Deprived of every joy I valued most,
My friend torn from me,* and my mistress lost,
Call not this gloom I wear, this anxious mien,
The dull effect of humour, or of spleen!
Still, still I mourn, with each returning day,
Him snatch'd by fate in early youth away;
And her—through tedious years of doubt and pain,
Fix'd in her choice, and faithful—but in vain!
Oh prone to pity, generous, and sincere,
Whose eye ne'er yet refused the wretch a tear;
Whose heart the real claim of friendship knows,
Nor thinks a lover's are but fancied woes;

* Sir William Russell, accidentally drowned, 1757.

See me—ere yet my destined course half done,
Cast forth a wanderer on a world unknown!
See me neglected on the world's rude coast,
Each dear companion of my voyage lost!
Nor ask why clouds of sorrow shade my brow,
And ready tears wait only leave to flow!
Why all that soothes a heart from anguish free,
And that delights the happy—palls with me!

UPON A VENERABLE RIVAL.

Full thirty frosts since thou wert young
Have chill'd the wither'd grove,
Thou wretch! and hast thou lived so long,
Nor yet forgot to love!

Ye Sages! spite of your pretences
To wisdom, you must own
Your folly frequently commences
When you acknowledge none.

Not that I deem it weak to love,
Or folly to admire;
But ah! the pangs we lovers prove
Far other years require.

Unheeded on the youthful brow
The beams of Phœbus play;
But unsupported Age stoops low
Beneath the sultry ray.

For once, then, if untutor'd youth,
Youth unapproved by years,
May chance to deviate into truth,
When your experience errs;

For once attempt not to despise
What I esteem a rule:
Who early loves, though young, is wise,—
Who old, though grey, a fool.

AN ODE* ON READING "SIR CHARLES GRANDISON."

1753.*

SAY, ye apostate and profane,
Wretches who blush not to disdain
Allegiance to your God,
Did e'er your idly-wasted love
Of virtue for her sake remove
And lift you from the crowd?

Would you the race of glory run,
Know, the devout, and they alone,
Are equal to the task:
The labours of the illustrious course
Far other than the unaided force
Of human vigour ask.

To arm against repeated ill
The patient heart, too brave to feel
The tortures of despair;
Nor safer yet high-crested Pride,
When wealth flows in with every tide
To gain admittance there.

To rescue from the tyrant's sword
The oppress'd;—unseen and unimplored,
To cheer the face of woe;
From lawless insult to defend
An orphan's right, a fallen friend,
And a forgiven foe;

These, these distinguish from the crowd,
And these alone, the great and good,
The guardians of mankind;
Whose bosoms with these virtues heave,
Oh, with what matchless speed, they leave
The multitude behind!

Then ask ye, from what cause on earth
Virtues like these derive their birth?
Derived from Heaven alone,
Full on that favour'd breast they shine,
Where faith and resignation join
To call the blessing down.

' Published by Richardson, in 1753.

Such is that heart;—but while the Muse
Thy theme, O Richardson, pursues,
Her feebler spirits faint;
She cannot reach, and would not wrong
That subject for an angel's song,
The hero, and the saint!

IN A LETTER TO C. P., ESQ.

ILL WITH THE RHEUMATISM.

Grant me the Muse, ye gods! whose humble flight
Seeks not the mountain-top's pernicious height;
Who can the tall Parnassian cliff forsake,
To visit of the still Lethean lake;
Now her slow pinions brush the silent shore,
Now gently skim the unwrinkled waters o'er,
There dips her downy plumes, thence upward flies,
And sheds soft slumbers on her votary's eyes.

IN A LETTER TO THE SAME.

IN IMITATION OF SHAKESPEARE.

Trust me, the meed of praise, dealt thriftily
From the nice scale of judgment, honours more
Than does the lavish and o'erbearing tide
Of profuse courtesy. Not all the gems
Of India's richest soil at random spread
O'er the gay vesture of some glittering dame,
Give such alluring vantage to the person,
As the scant lustre of a few, with choice
And comely guise of ornament disposed.

ODE, SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN ON THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND.

Thou magic lyre, whose fascinating sound
Seduced the savage monsters from their cave,
Drew rocks and trees, and forms uncouth around,
And bade wild Hebrus hush his listening wave;
No more thy undulating warblings flow
O'er Thracian wilds of everlasting snow!

Awake to sweeter sounds, thou magic lyre,
And paint a lover's bliss—a lover's pain!
Far nobler triumphs now thy notes inspire,
For see, Eurydice attends thy strain;
Her smile, a prize beyond the conjurer's aim,
Superior to the cancelled breath of fame.

From her sweet brow to chase the gloom of care,
To check the tear that dims the beaming eye,
To bid her heart the rising sigh forbear,
And flush her orient cheek with brighter joy,
In that dear breast soft sympathy to move,
And touch the springs of rapture and of love.

Ah me! how long bewildered and astray,
Lost and benighted, did my footsteps rove,
Till sent by Heaven to cheer my pathless way,
A star arose—the radiant star of love.
The God propitious joined our willing hands,
And Hymen wreathed us in his rosy bands.

Yet not the beaming eye, or placid brow,
Or golden tresses, hid the subtle dart;
To charms superior far than those I bow,
And nobler worth enslaves my vanquished heart;
The beauty, elegance, and grace combined,
Which beam transcendent from that angel mind.

While vulgar passions, meteors of a day,
Expire before the chilling blasts of age,
Our holy flame with pure and steady ray,
Its gloom shall brighten, and its pangs assuage;
By Virtue (sacred vestal) fed, shall shine,
And warm our fainting souls with energy divine.

AN EPISTLE TO ROBERT LLOYD, ESQ.*

1754.

'Tis not that I design to rob
Thee of thy birthright, gentle Bob,
For thou art born sole heir and single
Of dear Mat Prior's easy jingle;
Nor that I mean, while thus I knit
My threadbare sentiments together,
To shew my genius or my wit,
When God and you know, I have neither;
Or such, as might be better shown
By letting poetry alone.
'Tis not with either of these views,
That I presume to address the Muse:
But to divert a fierce banditti,

* Son of Dr. Pierson Lloyd, one of the Masters of Westminster School. Robert Lloyd edited the Connoisseur and St. James's Magazines.

(Sworn foes to everything that's witty,)
That, with a black infernal train,
Make cruel inroads in my brain,
And daily threaten to drive thence
My little garrison of sense:
The fierce banditti which I mean,
Are gloomy thoughts led on by Spleen.
Then there's another reason yet,
Which is, that I may fairly quit
The debt which justly became due
The moment when I heard from you:
And you might grumble, crony mine,
If paid in any other coin;
Since twenty sheets of lead, God knows,
(I would say twenty sheets of prose,)
Can ne'er be deem'd worth half so much
As one of gold, and yours was such.
Thus the preliminaries settled,
I fairly find myself pitch-kettled;*
And cannot see, though few see better,
How I shall hammer out a letter.
First, for a thought—since all agree—
A thought—I have it—let me see—
'Tis gone again — plague on't! I thought
I had it—but I have it not.
Dame Gurton thus, and Hodge her son,
That useful thing, her needle, gone,
Rake well the cinders, sweep the floor,
And sift the dust behind the door;
While eager Hodge beholds the prize
In old grimalkin's glaring eyes;
And Gammer finds it on her knees
In every shining straw she sees.
This simile were apt enough,
But I've another, critic-proof.
The virtuoso thus at noon,
Broiling beneath a July sun,
The gilded butterfly pursues
O'er hedge and ditch, through gaps and mews,
And after many a vain essay
To captivate the tempting prey,
Gives him at length the lucky pat,
And has him safe beneath his hat;
Then lifts it gently from the ground;
But ah! 'tis lost as soon as found;
Culprit his liberty regains;
Flits out of sight and mocks his pains,
The sense was dark, 'twas therefore fit
With simile to illustrate it;
But as too much obscures the sight,
As often as too little light,
We have our similes cut short,
For matters of more grave import.
That Matthew's numbers run with ease
Each man of common sense agrees;
All men of common sense allow,
That Robert's lines are easy too;
Where then the preference shall we place,
Or how do justice in this case?
Matthew (says Fame) with endless pains
Smoothed and refined the meanest strains,
Nor suffer'd one ill-chosen rhyme
To escape him at the idlest time;
And thus o'er all a lustre cast,
That while the language lives shall last,
An't please your ladyship (quoth I,—
For 'tis my business to reply;)
Sure so much labour, so much toil,
Bespeak at last a stubborn soil.
Theirs be the laurel-wreath decreed,
Who both write well and write full speed;
Who throw their Helicon about
As freely as a conduit spout.
Friend Robert, thus like *chien sçavant*,
Lets fall a poem *en passant*,
Nor needs his genuine ore refine;
'Tis ready polish'd from the mine.

* A slang word for puzzled.

THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH.

MORTALS! around your destined heads
Thick fly the shafts of Death,
And lo! the savage spoiler spreads
A thousand toils beneath.

In vain we trifle with our fate;
Try every art in vain;
At best we but prolong the date,
And lengthen out our pain.

Fondly we think all danger fled,
For Death is ever nigh;
Outstrips our unavailing speed,
Or meets us as we fly.

Thus the wreck'd mariner may strive
Some desert shore to gain,
Secure of life, if he survive
The fury of the main.

But there, to famine doom'd a prey
Finds the mistaken wretch
He but escaped the troubled sea,
To perish on the beach.

Since then in vain we strive to guard
Our frailty from the foe,
Lord, let me live not unprepared
To meet the fatal blow!

A COMPARISON.

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,
Both speed their journey with a restless stream;
The silent pace with which they steal away,
No wealth can bribe, no prayers persuade to stay;
Alike irrevocable both when past,
And a wide ocean swallows both at last.
Though each resemble each in every part,
A difference strikes at length the musing heart;
Streams never flow in vain; where streams abound
How laughs the land with various plenty crowned!
But time, that should enrich the nobler mind,
Neglected, leaves a dreary waste behind.

THE STREAM.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

Sweet stream, that winds through yonder glade,
Apt emblem of a virtuous maid!
Silent and chaste she steals along,
Far from the world's gay busy throng,
With gentle yet prevailing force,
Intent upon her destined course;
Graceful and useful all she does,
Blessing and blessed where'er she goes;
Pure-bosomed as that watery glass,
And heaven reflected in her face!

A SONG.

The sparkling eye, the mantling cheek,
The polished front, the snowy neck,
  How seldom we behold in one!
Glossy locks, and brow serene,
Venus' smiles, Diana's mien,
  All meet in you, and you alone.

Beauty, like other powers, maintains
Her empire, and by union reigns;
  Each single feature faintly warms:
But where at once we view displayed
Unblemished grace, the perfect maid
  Our eyes, our ears, our heart alarms.

So when on earth the god of day
Obliquely sheds his tempered ray,
  Through convex orbs the beams transmit,
The beams that gently warmed before,
Collected, gently warm no more,
  But glow with more prevailing heat.

SONG.

No more shall hapless Celia's ears
  Be flattered with the cries
Of lovers drowned in floods of tears,
  Or murdered by her eyes;
No serenade to break her rest,
Nor songs her slumbers to molest,
  With my fa, la, la.

The fragrant flowers that once would bloom
  And flourish in her hair,
Since she no longer breathes perfume
  Their odours to repair,
Must fade, alas! and wither now,
As placed on any common brow,
              With my fa, la, la.

Her lip, so winning and so meek,
  No longer has its charms;
As well she might by whistling seek
  To lure us to her arms;
Affected once, 'tis real now,
As her forsaken gums may show,
              With my fa, la, la.

The down that on her chin so smooth
  So lovely once appeared,
That, too, has left her with her youth,
  Or sprouts into a beard;
As fields, so green when newly sown,
With stubble stiff are overgrown,
              With my fa, la, la.

Then, Celia, leave your apish tricks,
  And change your girlish airs,
For ombre, snuff, and politics,
  Those joys that suit your years;
No patches can lost youth recall,
Nor whitewash prop a tumbling wall.
              With my fa, la la.

A SONG.

On the green margin of the brook
  Despairing Phyllida reclined,
Whilst every sigh and every look
  Declared the anguish of her mind.

"Am I less lovely then? (she cries,
  And in the waves her form surveyed;)
Oh yes, I see my languid eyes,
  My faded cheek, my colour fled:
These eyes no more like lightning pierced,
These cheeks grew pale, when Damon first
  His Phyllida betrayed.

"The rose he in his bosom wore,
How oft upon my breast was seen!
And when I kissed the drooping flower
'Behold,' he cried, 'it blooms again!'
The wreaths that bound my braided hair,
Himself next day was proud to wear
At church, or on the green."

While thus sad Phyllida lamented,
Chance brought unlucky Thyrsis on;
Unwillingly the nymph consented,
But Damon first the cheat begun.
She wiped the fallen tears away,
Then sighed and blushed, as who should say,
"Ah! Thyrsis, I am won."

ADDRESS TO MISS MACARTNEY,

AFTERWARDS MRS. GREVILLE, ON READING HER "PRAYER FOR INDIFFERENCE."*

1762.

And dwells there in a female heart,
By bounteous Heaven design'd
The choicest raptures to impart,
To feel the most refined;

Dwells there a wish in such a breast
Its nature to forego,
To smother in ignoble rest
At once both bliss and woe?

Far be the thought, and far the strain,
Which breathes the low desire,
How sweet soe'er the verse complain,
Though Phœbus string the lyre.

Come then, fair maid, (in nature wise,)
Who, knowing them, can tell
From generous sympathy what joys
The glowing bosom swell;

In justice to the various powers
Of pleasing, which you share,
Join me, amid your silent hours,
To form the better prayer.

With lenient balm may Oberon hence
To fairy-land be driven,
With every herb that blunts the sense
Mankind received from Heaven.

"Oh, if my Sovereign Author please,
Far be it from my fate,
To live unblest in torpid ease,
And slumber on in state;

"Each tender tie of life defied,
Whence social pleasures spring;
Unmoved with all the world beside,
A solitary thing."

Some Alpine mountain wrapt in snow,
Thus braves the whirling blast,
Eternal winter doomed to know,
No genial spring to taste;

In vain warm suns their influence shed,
The zephyrs sport in vain,
He rears unchanged his barren head,
Whilst beauty decks the plain.

* The prayer was addressed to Oberon, King of the Fairies.

What though in scaly armour dress'd,
Indifference may repel
The shafts of woe, in such a breast
No joy can ever dwell.

'Tis woven in the world's great plan,
And fix'd by Heaven's decree,
That all the true delights of man
Should spring from sympathy.

'Tis nature bids, and whilst the laws
Of nature we retain,
Our self-approving bosom draws
A pleasure from its pain.

Thus grief itself has comforts dear,
The sordid never know;
And ecstasy attends the tear,
When virtue bids it flow.

For when it streams from that pure source,
No bribes the heart can win,
To check, or alter from its course
The luxury within.

Peace to the phlegm of sullen elves,
Who, if from labour eased,
Extend no care beyond themselves,
Unpleasing and unpleased.

Let no low thought suggest the prayer!
Oh! grant, kind Heaven, to me,
Long as I draw ethereal air,
Sweet Sensibility!

Where'er the heavenly nymph is seen,
With lustre-beaming eye,
A train, attendant on their queen,
(Her rosy chorus) fly.

The jocund Loves in Hymen's band,
With torches ever bright,
And generous Friendship hand in hand,
With Pity's watery sight.

The gentler Virtues too are join'd
In youth immortal warm,
The soft relations which combined
Give life her every charm.

The Arts come smiling in the close,
And lend celestial fire;
The marble breathes, the canvass glows,
The Muses sweep the lyre.

"Still may my melting bosom cleave
To sufferings not my own;
And still the sigh responsive heave,
Where'er is heard a groan.

"So Pity shall take Virtue's part,
Her natural ally,
And fashioning my soften'd heart,
Prepare it for the sky."

This artless vow may Heaven rece
And you, fond maid, approve;
So may your guiding angel give
Whate'er you wish or love.

So may the rosy-finger'd hours
Lead on the various year,
And every joy, which now is yours,
Extend a larger sphere.

And suns to come, as round they wheel,
Your golden moments bless,
With all a tender heart can feel,
Or lively fancy guess.

AN ODE.*

SECUNDUM ARTEM.

I.

Shall I begin with *Ah*, or *Oh?*
Be sad? *Oh!* yes. Be glad? *Ah!* no.
Light subjects suit not grave Pindaric ode,
Which walks in metre down the Strophic road.
But let the sober matron wear
Her own mechanic sober air:
Ah me! ill suits, *alas!* the sprightly jig,
Long robes of ermine, or Sir Cloudesley's wig.
Come, placid Dulness, gently come,
And all my faculties benumb;
Let thought turn exile, while the vacant mind
To trickie words and pretty phrase confined,
Pumping for trim description's art,
To win the ear, neglects the heart.
So shall thy sister Taste's peculiar sons,
Lineal descendants from the Goths and Huns,
Struck with the true and grand sublime
Of *rhythm* converted into *rime*,
Court the quaint muse, and con her lessons o'er,
When sleep the sluggish waves by Granta's shore:
There shall each poet share and trim,
Stretch, cramp, or lop the verse's limb,
While rebel Wit beholds them with disdain,
And Fancy flies aloft, nor heeds their servile chain.

II.

O Fancy, bright aërial maid!
Where have thy vagrant footsteps stray'd!
For, *ah!* I miss thee 'midst thy wonted haunt,
Since silent now the enthusiastic chaunt,
Which erst like frenzy roll'd along,
Driven by the impetuous tide of song;
Rushing secure where native genius bore,
Not cautious coasting by the shelving shore.
Hail to the sons of modern Rime,
Mechanic dealers in sublime,
Whose lady Muse full wantonly is drest,
In light expression quaint, and tinsel vest,
Where swelling epithets are laid
(Art's ineffectual parade)

* Written in ridicule of the Pindarics of Mason.

As varnish on the cheek of harlot light;
The rest thin sown with profit or delight,
  But ill compares with ancient song,
  Where Genius pour'd its flood along;
Yet such is Art's presumptuous idle claim,
She marshals out the way to modern fame;
  From Grecian fable's pompous lore
  Description's studied, glittering store,
Smooth, soothing sounds, and sweet alternate rime,
Clinking, like change of bells, in tingle tangle chime.

III.

The lark shall soar in every Ode,
With flowers of light description strew'd;
And sweetly, warbling Philomel, shall flow
Thy soothing sadness in mechanic woe.
  Trim epithets shall spread their gloss,
  While every cell's o'ergrown with moss:
Here oaks shall rise in chains of ivy bound,
There smouldering stones o'erspread the rugged ground.
  Here forests brown, and azure hills,
  There babbling fonts, and prattling rills;
Here some gay river floats in crispèd streams,
While the bright sun now gilds his morning beams,
  Or sinking on his Thetis' breast,
  Drives in description down the west.
Oh let me boast, with pride becoming skill,
I crown the summit of Parnassus' hill:
  While Taste and Genius shall dispense,
  And sound shall triumph over sense;
O'er the gay mead with curious steps I'll stray,
And, like the bee, steal all the sweets away;
  Extract its beauty, and its power,
  From every new poetic flower,
And sweets collected may a wreath compose,
To bind the poet's brow, or please the critic's nose.

LINES WRITTEN DURING A PERIOD OF INSANITY.

HATRED and vengeance,—my eternal portion
Scarce can endure delay of execution,—
Wait with impatient readiness to seize my
  Soul in a moment.

Damn'd below Judas; more abhorr'd than he was,
Who for a few pence sold his holy Master!
Twice betray'd, Jesus me, the last delinquent,
Deems the profanest.

Man disavows, and Deity disowns me,
Hell might afford my miseries a shelter;
Therefore, Hell keeps her ever-hungry mouths all
Bolted against me.

Hard lot! encompassed with a thousand dangers;
Weary, faint, trembling with a thousand terrors,
I'm call'd, if vanquish'd! to receive a sentence
Worse than Abiram's.

Him the vindictive rod of angry Justice
Sent quick and howling to the centre headlong;
I, fed with judgment, in a fleshy tomb, am
Buried above ground.

LINES WRITTEN DURING THE AUTHOR'S SECOND PERIOD OF INSANITY.

1774.

Heu! quam remotus vescor ab omnibus
Quibus fruebar sub lare patrio,
Quam nescius jucunda quondam
Arva, domum, socios, reliqui,
Et præter omnes te mihi flebilem,
Te chariorem luce vel artubus,
Te vinculo nostram jugali
Deserui tremulam sub ense.

Sed nec ferocem me genuit pater,
Nec vagientem nutriit ubere
Leæna dumoso sub antro,
Fata sed hoc voluere nostra.
Et fluctuosum ceu mare volvitur,
Dum commovebar mille timoribus,
Coactus, in fauces Averni,
Totus atro peri sub amne.

ON OBSERVING SOME NAMES OF LITTLE NOTE RECORDED IN THE BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA.*

Oh, fond attempt to give a deathless lot
To names ignoble, born to be forgot!
In vain recorded in historic page,
They court the notice of a future age:
Those twinkling, tiny lustres of the land
Drop one by one from Fame's neglecting hand;
Lethæan gulfs receive them as they fall,
And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.
So when a child, as playful children use,
Has burnt to tinder a stale last year's news,
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire—
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire,
There goes the parson—O illustrious spark!
And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk.

* Written in 1780, and sent to the Rev. W. Unwin in a letter dated Sept. 3, in that year.



Olney Hymns.

I. Walking with God. *Gen.* v. 24.

Oh! for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void,
The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return!
Sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

II. Jehovah-Jireh. The Lord will Provide. *Gen.* xxii. 14.

The saints should never be dismay'd,
Nor sink in hopeless fear;
For when they least expect His aid,
The Saviour will appear.

This Abraham found: he raised the knife;
God saw, and said, "Forbear!
Yon ram shall yield his meaner life;
Behold the victim there."

Once David seem'd Saul's certain prey,
But hark! the foe's at hand;*
Saul turns his arms another way,
To save the invaded land.

When Jonah sunk beneath the wave,
He thought to rise no more;†
But God prepared a fish to save,
And bear him to the shore.

Blest proofs of power and grace divine
That meet us in His Word!
May every deep-felt care of mine
Be trusted with the Lord.

Wait for His seasonable aid,
And though it tarry, wait:
The promise may be long delay'd,
But cannot come too late.

III. JEHOVAH-ROPHI. I AM THE LORD THAT HEALETH THEE.
Exod. xv. 26.

HEAL us, Emmanuel! here we are,
Waiting to feel Thy touch:
Deep-wounded souls to Thee repair,
And, Saviour, we are such.

Our faith is feeble, we confess,
We faintly trust Thy word;
But wilt Thou pity us the less?
Be that far from Thee, Lord!

Remember him who once applied,
With trembling, for relief;
"Lord, I believe," with tears he cried,‡
"Oh, help my unbelief!"

She too, who touch'd Thee in the press,
And healing virtue stole,
Was answer'd, "Daughter, go in peace,§
Thy faith hath made thee whole."

Conceal'd amid the gathering throng,
She would have shunn'd Thy view;
And if her faith was firm and strong,
Had strong misgivings too.

* 1 Sam. xxiii. 27.
† Jonah i. 17.
‡ Mark ix. 24.
§ Mark v. 34.

Like her, with hopes and fears we come,
To touch Thee, if we may;
Oh! send us not despairing home.
Send none unheal'd away!

IV. Jehovah-nissi. The Lord my Banne
Exod. xvii. 15.

By whom was David taught
To aim the deadly blow,
When he Goliath fought,
And laid the Gittite low?
Nor sword nor spear the stripling took,
But chose a pebble from the brook.

'Twas Israel's God and King
Who sent him to the fight;
Who gave him strength to sling,
And skill to aim aright.
Ye feeble saints, your strength endures,
Because young David's God is yours.

Who order'd Gideon forth,
To storm the invaders' camp,
With arms of little worth,
A pitcher and a lamp?*
The trumpets made his coming known
And all the host was overthrown.

Oh! I have seen the day,
When with a single word,
God helping me to say,
"My trust is in the Lord,"
My soul hath quell'd a thousand foes,
Fearless of all that could oppose.

But unbelief, self-will,
Self-righteousness, and pride,
How often do they steal
My weapon from my side!
Yet David's Lord, and Gideon's friend,
Will help his servant to the end.

V. Jehovah-shalom. The Lord send Peace.
Judges vi. 24.

Jesus! whose blood so freely stream'd
To satisfy the law's demand;
By Thee from guilt and wrath redeem'd,
Before the Father's face I stand.

* Judges vii. 16 and 20.

To reconcile offending man,
  Make Justice drop her angry rod;
What creature could have form'd the plan,
  Or who fulfil it but a God?

No drop remains of all the curse,
  For wretches who deserved the whole;
No arrows dipt in wrath to pierce
  The guilty, but returning soul.

Peace by such means so dearly bought,
  What rebel could have hoped to see?
Peace, by his injured Sovereign wrought,
  His Sovereign fasten'd to a tree.

Now, Lord, Thy feeble worm prepare!
  For strife with earth and hell begins;
Confirm and gird me for the war;
  They hate the soul that hates his sins.

Let them in horrid league agree!
  They may assault, they may distress;
But cannot quench Thy love to me,
  Nor rob me of the Lord my peace.

VI. Wisdom. *Prov.* viii. 22-31.

"Ere God had built the mountains,
  Or raised the fruitful hills;
Before he fill'd the fountains
  That feed the running rills;
In me from everlasting,
  The wonderful I am,
Found pleasures never wasting,
  And Wisdom is my name.

"When, like a tent to dwell in,
  He spread the skies abroad,
And swathed about the swelling
  Of Ocean's mighty flood;
He wrought by weight and measure,
  And I was with Him then:
Myself the Father's pleasure,
  And mine, the sons of men."

Thus Wisdom's words discover
  Thy glory and Thy grace,
Thou everlasting lover
  Of our unworthy race!

Thy gracious eye survey'd us
  Ere stars were seen above;
In wisdom thou hast made us,
  And died for us in love.

And couldst Thou be delighted
  With creatures such as we,
Who, when we saw Thee, slighted,
  And nail'd Thee to a tree?
Unfathomable wonder,
  And mystery divine!
The voice that speaks in thunder,
  Says, "Sinner, I am thine!"

VII. Vanity of the World.

God gives His mercies to be spent;
  Your hoard will do your soul no good;
Gold is a blessing only lent,
  Repaid by giving others food.

The world's esteem is but a bribe,
  To buy their peace you sell your own;
The slave of a vainglorious tribe,
  Who hate you while they make you known.

The joy that vain amusements give,
  Oh! sad conclusion that it brings!
The honey of a crowded hive,
  Defended by a thousand stings.

'Tis thus the world rewards the fools
  That live upon her treacherous smiles:
She leads them blindfold by her rules,
  And ruins all whom she beguiles.

God knows the thousands who go down
  From pleasure into endless woe;
And with a long despairing groan
  Blaspheme their Maker as they go.

Oh fearful thought! be timely wise;
  Delight but in a Saviour's charms,
And God shall take you to the skies,
  Embraced in everlasting arms.

VIII. O Lord, I will Praise Thee. *Isaiah* xii. 1.

I will praise Thee every day,
Now Thine anger's turn'd away;
Comfortable thoughts arise
From the bleeding sacrifice.

Here, in the fair gospel-field,
Wells of free salvation yield
Streams of life, a plenteous store,
And my soul shall thirst no more.

Jesus is become at length
My salvation and my strength;
And His praises shall prolong,
While I live, my pleasant song.

Praise ye, then, His glorious name,
Publish His exalted fame!
Still His worth your praise exceeds;
Excellent are all His deeds.

Raise again the joyful sound,
Let the nations roll it round!
Zion, shout! for this is He;
God the Saviour dwells in thee.

IX. THE CONTRITE HEART. *Isaiah* lvii. 15.

THE Lord will happiness divine
  On contrite hearts bestow;
Then tell me, gracious God, is mine
  A contrite heart, or no?

I hear, but seem to hear in vain,
  Insensible as steel;
If aught is felt, 'tis only pain,
  To find I cannot feel.

I sometimes think myself inclined
  To love Thee, if I could;
But often feel another mind,
  Averse to all that's good.

My best desires are faint and few,
  I fain would strive for more;
But when I cry, "My strength renew!"
  Seem weaker than before.

Thy saints are comforted, I know,
  And love Thy house of prayer;
I therefore go where others go,
  But find no comfort there.

Oh make this heart rejoice or ache;
  Decide this doubt for me;
And if it be not broken, break—
  And heal it, if it be

X. The Future Peace and Glory of the Church
Isaiah lx. 15-20.

Hear what God the Lord hath spoken,
"O my people, faint and few,
Comfortless, afflicted, broken,
Fair abodes I build for you.
Thorns of heartfelt tribulation
Shall no more perplex your ways:
You shall name your walls, Salvation,
And your gates shall all be Praise.

"There, like streams that feed the garden,
Pleasures without end shall flow,
For the Lord, your faith rewarding,
All His bounty shall bestow;
Still in undisturb'd possession
Peace and righteousness shall reign;
Never shall you feel oppression,
Hear the voice of war again.

"Ye no more your suns descending,
Waning moons no more shall see;
But, your griefs for ever ending,
Find eternal noon in me:
God shall rise, and shining o'er ye,
Change to day the gloom of night;
He, the Lord, shall be your glory,
God your everlasting light."

XI. Jehovah our Righteousness. *Jer.* xxiii. 6.

My God, how perfect are thy ways!
But mine polluted are;
Sin twines itself about my praise,
And slides into my prayer.

When I would speak what Thou hast done
To save me from my sin,
I cannot make Thy mercies known,
But self-applause creeps in.

Divine desire, that holy flame
Thy grace creates in me;
Alas! impatience is its name,
When it returns to Thee.

This heart, a fountain of vile thoughts,
How does it overflow.
While self upon the surface floats,
Still bubbling from below.

Let others in the gaudy dress
Of fancied merit shine;
The Lord shall be my righteousness,
The Lord for ever mine.

XII. Ephraim Repenting. *Jer.* xxxi. 18-20.

My God, till I receive Thy stroke,
How like a beast was I!
So unaccustom'd to the yoke,
So backward to comply.

With grief my just reproach I bear;
Shame fills me at the thought,
How frequent my rebellions were,
What wickedness I wrought.

Thy merciful restraint I scorn'd,
And left the pleasant road;
Yet turn me, and I shall be turn'd;
Thou art the Lord my God.

"Is Ephraim banish'd from my thoughts,
Or vile in my esteem?
No," saith the Lord, "with all his faults,
I still remember him.

"Is he a dear and pleasant child?
Yes, dear and pleasant still;
Though sin his foolish heart beguiled,
And he withstood my will.

"My sharp rebuke has laid him low,
He seeks my face again;
My pity kindles at his woe,
He shall not seek in vain."

XIII. The Covenant. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25-28.

The Lord proclaims His grace abroad!
"Behold, I change your hearts of stone;
Each shall renounce his idol-god,
And serve, henceforth, the Lord alone.

"My grace, a flowing stream, proceeds
To wash your filthiness away;
Ye shall abhor your former deeds,
And learn my statutes to obey.

"My truth the great design ensures,
  I give myself away to you;
You shall be mine, I will be yours,
  Your God unalterably true.

"Yet not unsought, or unimplored,
  The plenteous grace I shall confer;*
No—your whole hearts shall seek the Lord,
  I'll put a praying spirit there.

"From the first breath of life divine
  Down to the last expiring hour,
The gracious work shall all be mine,
  Begun and ended in my power."

XIV. Jehovah-shammah. *Ezek.* xlviii. 35.

As birds their infant brood protect,†
  And spread their wings to shelter them,
Thus saith the Lord to His elect,
  "So will I guard Jerusalem."

And what then is Jerusalem,
  This darling object of His care?
Where is its worth in God's esteem?
  Who built it? who inhabits there?

Jehovah founded it in blood,
  The blood of His incarnate Son;
There dwell the saints, once foes to God,
  The sinners whom He calls His own.

There, though besieged on every side,
  Yet much beloved and guarded well,
From age to age they have defied
  The utmost force of earth and hell.

Let earth repent, and hell despair,
  This city has a sure defence;
Her name is call'd, "The Lord is there,"
  And who has power to drive Him thence?

XV. Praise for the Fountain Opened. *Zech.* xiii. 1.

There is a fountain fill'd with blood,
  Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
  Lose all their guilty stains.

* Ezek. xxxvi. 37. † Isaiah xxxi. 5.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, as vile as he,
Wash'd all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom'd church of God
Be saved, to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy power to save;
When this poor lisping stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared
(Unworthy though I be)
For me a blood-bought free reward,
A golden harp for me!

'Tis strung and tuned for endless years,
And form'd by power divine,
To sound in God the Father's ears
No other name but Thine.

XVI. THE SOWER. *Matt.* xiii. 3.

YE sons of earth prepare the plough,
Break up your fallow ground;
The sower is gone forth to sow,
And scatter blessings round.

The seed that finds a stony soil
Shoots forth a hasty blade;
But ill repays the sower's toil,
Soon wither'd, scorch'd, and dead.

The thorny ground is sure to balk
All hopes of harvest there,
We find a tall and sickly stalk,
But not the fruitful ear.

The beaten path and highway side,
Receive the trust in vain;
The watchful birds the spoil divide,
And pick up all the grain.

But where the Lord of grace and power
Has bless'd the happy field,
How plenteous is the golden store
The deep-wrought furrows yield!

Father of mercies, we have need
Of Thy preparing grace;
Let the same Hand that gives the seed
Provide a fruitful place!

XVII. The House of Prayer. *Mark* xi. 17.

Thy mansion is the Christian's heart,
O Lord, Thy dwelling place secure!
Bid the unruly throng depart,
And leave the consecrated door.

Devoted as it is to Thee,
A thievish swarm frequents the place;
They steal away my joys from me,
And rob my Saviour of His praise.

There, too, a sharp designing trade
Sin, Satan, and the World maintain;
Nor cease to press me, and persuade
To part with ease, and purchase pain.

I know them, and I hate their din;
And weary of the bustling crowd;
But while their voice is heard within,
I cannot serve Thee as I would.

Oh! for the joy Thy presence gives,
What peace shall reign when Thou art there;
Thy presence makes this den of thieves
A calm delightful house of prayer.

And if Thou make Thy temple shine,
Yet, self-abased, will I adore;
The gold and silver are not mine;
I give Thee what was Thine before.

XVIII. Lovest Thou Me? *John* xxi. 16.

Hark, my soul! it is the Lord;
'Tis thy Saviour, hear His word;
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,
"Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me?

"I deliver'd thee when bound,
And when bleeding, heal'd thy wound;
Sought thee wandering, set thee right,
Turn'd thy darkness into light.

"Can a woman's tender care
Cease towards the child she bare?
Yes, she may forgetful be,
Yet will I remember thee.

"Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.

"Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of my throne shalt be;—
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me?"

Lord it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love Thee and adore,—
Oh! for grace to love Thee more!

XIX. Contentment. *Phil.* iv. 11.

Fierce passions discompose the mind,
As tempests vex the sea;
But calm content and peace we find,
When, Lord, we turn to Thee.

In vain by reason and by rule
We try to bend the will;
For none but in the Saviour's school
Can learn the heavenly skill.

Since at His feet my soul has sate,
His gracious words to hear,
Contented with my present state,
I cast on Him my care.

"Art thou a sinner, soul?" He said,
"Then how canst thou complain?
How light thy troubles here, if weigh'd
With everlasting pain!

"If thou of murmuring wouldst be cured,
Compare thy griefs with mine;
Think what my love for thee endured,
And thou wilt not repine.

"'Tis I appoint thy daily lot,
And I do all things well;
Thou soon shalt leave this wretched spot,
And rise with me to dwell.

"In life my grace shall strength supply,
Proportion'd to thy day;
At death thou [still] shalt find me nigh,
To wipe thy tears away."

Thus I, who once my wretched days
In vain repinings spent,
Taught in my Saviour's school of grace,
Have learnt to be content.

XX. OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL. *Heb.* iv. 2.

ISRAEL in ancient days
Not only had a view
Of Sinai in a blaze,
But learn'd the Gospel too;
The types and figures were a glass,
In which they saw a Saviour's face.

The paschal sacrifice
And blood-besprinkled door,*
Seen with enlighten'd eyes,
And once applied with power,
Would teach the need of other blood,
To reconcile an angry God.

The Lamb, the Dove, set forth
His perfect innocence,†
Whose blood of matchless worth
Should be the soul's defence;
For He who can for sin atone,
Must have no failings of His own.

The scape-goat on his head ‡
The people's trespass bore,
And to the desert led,
Was to be seen no more:
In him our Surety seem'd to say,
"Behold, I bear your sins away."

* Exod. xii. 13. † Lev. xii. 6. ‡ Lev. xvi. 21.

Dipt in his fellow's blood,
The living bird went free;[1]
The type, well understood,
Express'd the sinner's plea;
Described a guilty soul enlarged,
And by a Saviour's death discharged.

Jesus, I love to trace,
Throughout the sacred page,
The footsteps of Thy grace,
The same in every age!
Oh grant that I may faithful be
To clearer light vouchsafed to me!

XXI. Sardis. *Rev.* iii. 1-6.

"Write to Sardis," saith the Lord,
"And write what He declares,
He whose Spirit, and whose word,
Upholds the seven stars:
All thy works and ways I search,
Find thy zeal and love decay'd;
Thou art call'd a living church,
But thou art cold and dead.

"Watch, remember, seek, and strive,
Exert thy former pains;
Let thy timely care revive,
And strengthen what remains;
Cleanse thine heart, thy works amend,
Former times to mind recall,
Lest my sudden stroke descend,
And smite thee once for all.

"Yet I number now in thee
A few that are upright;
These my Father's face shall see,
And walk with me in white.
When in judgment I appear,
They for mine shall be confess'd;
Let my faithful servants hear,—
And woe be to the rest!"

XXII. Prayer for Children.

Bestow, dear Lord, upon our youth,
The gift of saving grace;
And let the seed of sacred truth
Fall in a fruitful place.

[1] Lev. xiv. 51–53.

Grace is a plant, where'er it grows,
Of pure and heavenly root;
But fairest in the youngest shows,
And yields the sweetest fruit.

Ye careless ones, O hear betimes
The voice of sovereign love!
Your youth is stain'd with many crimes,
But mercy reigns above.

True, you are young, but there's a stone
Within the youngest breast;
Or half the crimes which you have done
Would rob you of your rest.

For you the public prayer is made:
Oh! join the public prayer!
For you the secret tear is shed:
Oh shed yourselves a tear!

We pray that you may early prove
The Spirit's power to teach;
You cannot be too young to love
That Jesus whom we preach.

XXIII. Pleading for and with Youth.

Sin has undone our wretched race;
But Jesus has restored,
And brought the sinner face to face
With his forgiving Lord.

This we repeat from year to year,
And press upon our youth;
Lord, give them an attentive ear,
Lord, save them by Thy truth!

Blessings upon the rising race!
Make this a happy hour,
According to Thy richest grace,
And thine Almighty power.

We feel for your unhappy state,
(May you regard it too,)
And would a while ourselves forget
To pour out prayer for you.

We see, though you perceive it not,
The approaching awful doom;
Oh tremble at the solemn thought,
And flee the wrath to come!

Dear Saviour, let this new-born year
Spread an alarm abroad;
And cry in every careless ear,
"Prepare to meet thy God!"

XXIV. Prayer for Children.

Gracious Lord, our children see,
By Thy mercy we are free;
But shall these, alas! remain
Subjects still of Satan's reign?
Israel's young ones, when of old
Pharaoh threaten'd to withhold,*
Then Thy messenger said, "No;
Let the children also go!"

When the angel of the Lord,
Drawing forth his dreadful sword,
Slew with an avenging hand,
All the first-born of the land; †
Then Thy people's doors he pass'd,
Where the bloody sign was placed:
Hear us, now, upon our knees,
Plead the blood of Christ for these!

Lord, we tremble, for we know
How the fierce malicious foe,
Wheeling round his watchful flight,
Keeps them ever in his sight:
Spread Thy pinions, King of kings!
Hide them safe beneath Thy wings;
Lest the ravenous bird of prey
Stoop and bear the brood away.

XXV. Jehovah Jesus.

My song shall bless the Lord of all,
My praise shall climb to His abode;
Thee, Saviour, by that name I call,
The great Supreme, the mighty God.

Without beginning or decline,
Object of faith and not of sense;
Eternal ages saw Him shine,
He shines eternal ages hence.

* Exod. x. 9. † Exod. xii. 12.

As much when in the manger laid,
  Almighty Ruler of the sky,
As when the six days' work He made
  Fill'd all the morning stars with joy.

Of all the crowns Jehovah bears,
  Salvation is His dearest claim;
That gracious sound well pleased He hears,
  And owns Emmanuel for His name.

A cheerful confidence I feel,
  My well placed hopes with joy I see;
My bosom glows with heavenly zeal,
  To worship Him who died for me.

As man, He pities my complaint,
  His power and truth are all divine;
He will not fail, He cannot faint;
  Salvation's sure, and must be mine.

XXVI. On Opening a Place for Social Prayer

Jesus! where'er Thy people meet,
There they behold Thy mercy seat;
Where'er they seek Thee, Thou art found,
And every place is hallow'd ground.

For Thou, within no walls confined,
Inhabitest the humble mind;
Such ever bring Thee where they come,
And going, take Thee to their home.

Dear Shepherd of Thy chosen few!
Thy former mercies here renew;
Here to our waiting hearts proclaim
The sweetness of Thy saving name.

Here may we prove the power of prayer.
To strengthen faith, and sweeten care;
To teach our faint desires to rise,
And bring all Heaven before our eyes.

Behold, at Thy commanding word
We stretch the curtain and the cord;*
Come Thou, and fill this wider space,
And bless us with a large increase.

* Isaiah liv. 2.

Lord, we are few, but Thou art near:
Nor short Thine arm, nor deaf Thine ear;
Oh rend the heavens, come quickly down,
And make a thousand hearts Thine own.

XXVII. Welcome to the Table.

This is the feast of heavenly wine,
And God invites to sup;
The juices of the living Vine
Were press'd to fill the cup.

Oh! bless the Saviour, ye that eat,
With royal dainties fed;
Not heaven affords a costlier treat,
For Jesus is the bread.

The vile, the lost, He calls to them;
Ye trembling souls, appear!
The righteous in their own esteem
Have no acceptance here.

Approach, ye poor, nor dare refuse
The banquet spread for you;
Dear Saviour, this is welcome news,
Then I may venture too.

If guilt and sin afford a plea,
And may obtain a place,
Surely the Lord will welcome me,
And I shall see his face.

XXVIII. Jesus Hasting to Suffer.

The Saviour, what a noble flame
Was kindled in His breast,
When hasting to Jerusalem,
He march'd before the rest.

Good will to men, and zeal for God,
His every thought engross;
He longs to be baptized with blood,*
He pants to reach the cross!

With all His suffering full in view,
And woes to us unknown,
Forth to the task His spirit flew
'Twas love that urged Him on.

* Luke xii. 50.

Lord, we return Thee what we can:
  Our hearts shall sound abroad,
Salvation to the dying Man,
  And to the rising God!

And while Thy bleeding glories here
  Engage our wondering eyes,
We learn our lighter cross to bear,
  And hasten to the skies.

XXIX. Exhortation to Prayer.

What various hindrances we meet
In coming to a mercy seat!
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer,
But wishes to be often there?

Prayer makes the darken'd cloud withdraw
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above.

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

While Moses stood with arms spread wide,
Success was found on Israel's side;
But when through weariness they fail'd,
That moment Amalek prevail'd.*

Have you no words? Ah, think again,
Words flow apace when you complain,
And fill your fellow-creature's ear
With the sad tale of all your care.

Were half the breath thus vainly spent
To heaven in supplication sent,
Your cheerful song would oftener be
"Hear what the Lord has done for me."

XXX. The Light and Glory of the Word.

The Spirit breathes upon the word,
  And brings the truth to sight;
Precepts and promises afford
  A sanctifying light.

* Exodus xvii. 11, 12.

A glory gilds the sacred page,
  Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age,
  It gives, but borrows none.

The hand that gave it still supplies
  The gracious light and heat;
His truths upon the nations rise,
  They rise, but never set.

Let everlasting thanks be thine,
  For such a bright display,
As makes a world of darkness shine
  With beams of heavenly day.

My soul rejoices to pursue
  The steps of Him I love,
Till glory break upon my view
  In brighter worlds above.

XXXI. On the Death of a Minister.

His master taken from his head,
  Elisha saw him go;
And in desponding accents said,
  "Ah, what must Israel do?"

But he forgot the Lord who lifts
  The beggar to the throne;
Nor knew that all Elijah's gifts
  Would soon be made his own.

What! when a Paul has run his course,
  Or when Apollos dies,
Is Israel left without resource,
  And have we no supplies?

Yes, while the dear Redeemer lives,
  We have a boundless store,
And shall be fed with what He gives,
  Who lives for evèrmore.

XXXII. The Shining Light.

My former hopes are fled,
  My terror now begins;
I feel, alas! that I am dead
  In trespasses and sins.

Ah, whither shall I fly?
I hear the thunder roar;
The Law proclaims Destruction nigh,
And Vengeance at the door.

When I review my ways,
I dread impending doom:
But sure a friendly whisper says,
"Flee from the wrath to come."

I see, or think I see,
A glimmering from afar;
A beam of day, that shines for me,
To save me from despair.

Forerunner of the sun,*
It marks the pilgrim's way;
I'll gaze upon it while I run,
And watch the rising day.

XXXIII. The Waiting Soul.

Breathe from the gentle south, O Lord,
And cheer me from the north;
Blow on the treasures of thy word,
And call the spices forth!

I wish, Thou knowest, to be resign'd,
And wait with patient hope;
But hope delay'd fatigues the mind,
And drinks the spirits up.

Help me to reach the distant goal;
Confirm my feeble knee;
Pity the sickness of a soul
That faints for love of Thee!

Cold as I feel this heart of mine,
Yet, since I feel it so,
It yields some hope of life divine
Within, however low.

I seem forsaken and alone,
I hear the lion roar;
And every door is shut but one,
And that is Mercy's door.

There, till the dear Deliverer come,
I'll wait with humble prayer;
And when He calls His exile home,
The Lord shall find him there.

* Psalm cxxx. 6.

XXXIV. Seeking the Beloved.

To those who love the Lord I speak;
Is my Beloved near?
The Bridegroom of my soul I seek,
Oh! when will He appear?

Though once a man of grief and shame,
Yet now He fills a throne,
And bears the greatest, sweetest name,
That earth or heaven have known.

Grace flies before, and love attends
His steps where'er he goes;
Though none can see Him but His friends,
And they were once his foes

He speaks;—obedient to His call
Our warm affections move:
Did He but shine alike on all,
Then all alike would love.

Then love in every heart would reign,
And war would cease to roar;
And cruel and bloodthirsty men
Would thirst for blood no more.

Such Jesus is, and such His grace;
Oh, may He shine on you!
And tell him, when you see His face,
I long to see Him too.*

XXXV. Welcome Cross.

'Tis my happiness below
Not to live without the cross,
But the Saviour's power to know,
Sanctifying every loss:
Trials must and will befall;
But with humble faith to see
Love inscribed upon them all,
This is happiness to me.

God in Israel sows the seeds
Of affliction, pain, and toil;
These spring up and choke the weeds
Which would else o'erspread the soil:

* Cant. v. 8.

Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer;
Trials bring me to His feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there.

Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisement by the way,
Might I not with reason fear
I should prove a castaway?
Bastards may escape the rod,*
Sunk in earthly vain delight;
But the true-born child of God
Must not—would not, if he might.

XXXVI. Afflictions Sanctified by the Word.

Oh how I love Thy holy Word,
Thy gracious covenant, O Lord!
It guides me in the peaceful way;
I think upon it all the day.

What are the mines of shining wealth,
The strength of youth, the bloom of health!
What are all joys compared with those
Thine everlasting Word bestows!

Long unafflicted, undismay'd,
In pleasure's path secure I stray'd;
Thou mad'st me feel thy chast'ning rod,†
And straight I turned unto my God.

What though it pierced my fainting heart,
I bless'd Thine hand that caused the smart:
It taught my tears awhile to flow,
But saved me from eternal woe.

Oh! hadst Thou left me unchastised,
Thy precepts I had still despised;
And still the snare in secret laid
Had my unwary feet betray'd.

I love Thee, therefore, O my God,
And breathe towards Thy dear abode;
Where, in Thy presence fully blest,
Thy chosen saints for ever rest.

* Hebrews xii. 8. † Psalm cxix. 71.

XXXVII. Temptation.

The billows swell, the winds are high,
Clouds overcast my wintry sky;
Out of the depths to Thee I call,—
My fears are great, my strength is small.

O Lord, the pilot's part perform,
And guard and guide me through the storm;
Defend me from each threatening ill,
Control the waves,—say, "Peace! be still."

Amidst the roaring of the sea
My soul still hangs her hope on Thee;
Thy constant love, thy faithful care,
Is all that saves me from despair.

Dangers of every shape and name
Attend the followers of the Lamb,
Who leave the world's deceitful shore,
And leave it to return no more.

Though tempest-toss'd and half a wreck,
My Saviour through the floods I seek;
Let neither winds nor stormy main
Force back my shatter'd bark again.

XXXVIII. Looking Upwards in a Storm.

God of my life, to Thee I call,
Afflicted at Thy feet I fall;
When the great water-floods prevail,*
Leave not my trembling heart to fail!

Friend of the friendless and the faint,
Where should I lodge my deep complaint,
Where but with Thee, whose open door
Invites the helpless and the poor!

Did ever mourner plead with Thee,
And Thou refuse that mourner's plea?
Does not the word still fix'd remain,
That none shall seek Thy face in vain?

That were a grief I could not bear,
Didst Thou not hear and answer prayer:
But a prayer-hearing, answering God
Supports me under every load.

* Psalm lxix. 15.

Fair is the lot that's cast for me;
I have an Advocate with Thee;
They whom the world caresses most
Have no such privilege to boast.

Poor though I am, despised, forgot,*
Yet God, my God, forgets me not:
And he is safe, and must succeed,
For whom the Lord vouchsafes to plead.

XXXIX. The Valley of the Shadow of Death.

My soul is sad, and much dismay'd;
See, Lord, what legions of my foes,
With fierce Apollyon at their head,
My heavenly pilgrimage oppose

See, from the ever-burning lake,
How like a smoky cloud they rise!
With horrid blasts my soul they shake,
With storms of blasphemies and lies.

Their fiery arrows reach the mark,†
My throbbing heart with anguish tear;
Each lights upon a kindred spark,
And finds abundant fuel there.

I hate the thought that wrongs the Lord;
Oh! I would drive it from my breast,
With Thy own sharp two-edgèd sword,
Far as the east is from the west.

Come, then, and chase the cruel host,
Heal the deep wounds I have received!
Nor let the power of darkness boast,
That I am foil'd, and Thou art grieved!

XL. Peace after a Storm.

When darkness long has veil'd my mind,
And smiling day once more appears,
Then, my Redeemer, then I find
The folly of my doubts and fears.

Straight I upbraid my wandering heart,
And blush that I should ever be
Thus prone to act so base a part,
Or harbour one hard thought of Thee!

* Psalm xl. 17.   † Eph. vi. 16.

Oh! let me then at length be taught
What I am still so slow to learn,
That God is love, and changes not,
Nor knows the shadow of a turn.

Sweet truth, and easy to repeat!
But when my faith is sharply tried,
I find myself a learner yet,
Unskilful, weak, and apt to slide.

But, O my Lord, one look from Thee
Subdues the disobedient will,
Drives doubt and discontent away,
And Thy rebellious worm is still.

Thou art as ready to forgive
As I am ready to repine;
Thou, therefore, all the praise receive;
Be shame and self-abhorrence mine.

XLI. Mourning and Longing.

The Saviour hides His face;
My spirit thirsts to prove
Renew'd supplies of pardoning grace,
And never-fading love.

The favour'd souls who know
What glories shine in Him,
Pant for His presence as the roe
Pants for the living stream.

What trifles tease me now!
They swarm like summer flies;
They cleave to everything I do,
And swim before my eyes.

How dull the Sabbath day,
Without the Sabbath's Lord!
How toilsome then to sing and pray,
And wait upon the Word!

Of all the truths I hear,
How few delight my taste!
I glean a berry here and there,
But mourn the vintage past.

Yet let me (as I ought)
Still hope to be supplied;
No pleasure else is worth a thought,
Nor shall I be denied.

Though I am but a worm,
Unworthy of His care,
The Lord will my desire perform,
And grant me all my prayer.

XLII. Self-Acquaintance.

Dear Lord! accept a sinful heart,
Which of itself complains,
And mourns, with much and frequent smart,
The evil it contains.

There fiery seeds of anger lurk,
Which often hurt my frame;
And wait but for the tempter's work,
To fan them to a flame.

Legality holds out a bribe
To purchase life from Thee;
And Discontent would fain prescribe
How Thou shalt deal with me.

While Unbelief withstands Thy grace,
And puts the mercy by;
Presumption, with a brow of brass,
Says, "Give me, or I die!"

How eager are my thoughts to roam,
In quest of what they love!
But ah! when duty calls them home,
How heavily they move!

Oh, cleanse me in a Saviour's blood,
Transform me by Thy power,
And make me Thy beloved abode,
And let me roam no more.

XLIII. Prayer for Patience.

Lord, who hast suffer'd all for me,
My peace and pardon to procure,
The lighter cross I bear for Thee,
Help me with patience to endure.

The storm of loud repining hush;
I would in humble silence mourn;
Why should the unburnt, though burning bush,
Be angry as the crackling thorn?

Man should not faint at Thy rebuke,
  Like Joshua falling on his face,*
When the cursed thing that Achan took
  Brought Israel into just disgrace.

Perhaps some golden wedge suppress'd,
  Some secret sin offends my God;
Perhaps that Babylonish vest,
  Self-righteousness, provokes the rod.

Ah! were I buffeted all day,
  Mock'd, crown'd with thorns, and spit upon,
I yet should have no right to say,
  My great distress is mine alone.

Let me not angrily declare
  No pain was ever sharp like mine,
Nor murmur at the cross I bear,
  But rather weep, remembering Thine.

XLIV. Submission.

O Lord, my best desire fulfil,
  And help me to resign
Life, health, and comfort to Thy will,
  And make Thy pleasure mine.

Why should I shrink at Thy command,
  Whose love forbids my fears?
Or tremble at the gracious hand
  That wipes away my tears?

No, rather let me freely yield
  What most I prize to Thee;
Who never hast a good withheld,
  Or wilt withhold, from me.

Thy favour, all my journey through,
  Thou art engaged to grant;
What else I want, or think I do,
  'Tis better still to want.

Wisdom and mercy guide my way,
  Shall I resist them both?
A poor blind creature of a day,
  And crush'd before the moth!

* Joshua vii. 10, 11.

But ah! my inward spirit cries,
Still bind me to Thy sway;
Else the next cloud that veils the skies
Drives all these thoughts away.

XLV. The Happy Change.

How bless'd Thy creature is, O God,
When with a single eye,
He views the lustre of Thy Word,
The dayspring from on high!

Through all the storms that veil the skies
And frown on earthly things,
The Sun of Righteousness he eyes,
With healing on His wings.

Struck by that light, the human heart,
A barren soil no more,
Sends the sweet smell of grace abroad,
Where serpents lurk'd before.*

The soul, a dreary province once
Of Satan's dark domain,
Feels a new empire form'd within,
And owns a heavenly reign.

The glorious orb whose golden beams
The fruitful year control,
Since first obedient to Thy Word,
He started from the goal,

Has cheer'd the nations with the joys
His orient rays impart;
But, Jesus, 'tis Thy light alone
Can shine upon the heart.

XLVI. Retirement.

Far from the world, O Lord, I flee,
From strife and tumult far;
From scenes where Satan wages still
His most successful war.

The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With prayer and praise agree;
And seem, by Thy sweet bounty made,
For those who follow Thee.

There if Thy Spirit touch the soul,
And grace her mean abode,
Oh, with what peace, and joy, and love,
She communes with her God!

* Isaiah xxxv. 7.

There like the nightingale she pours
Her solitary lays;
Nor asks a witness of her song,
Nor thirsts for human praise.

Author and Guardian of my life,
Sweet source of light Divine,
And,—all harmonious names in one,—
My Saviour! Thou art mine!

What thanks I owe Thee, and what love,
A boundless, endless store,
Shall echo through the realms above,
When time shall be no more.

XLVII. The Hidden Life.

To tell the Saviour all my wants,
How pleasing is the task!
Nor less to praise Him when He grants
Beyond what I can ask.

My labouring spirit vainly seeks
To tell but half the joy,
With how much tenderness He speaks,
And helps me to reply.

Nor were it wise, nor should I choose,
Such secrets to declare;
Like precious wines their taste they lose,
Exposed to open air.

But this with boldness I proclaim,
Nor care if thousands hear,
Sweet is the ointment of His name,
Not life is half so dear.

And can you frown, my former friends,
Who knew what once I was,
And blame the song that thus commends
The Man who bore the cross?

Trust me, I draw the likeness true,
And not as fancy paints;
Such honour may He give to you,
For such have all His saints.

XLVIII. Joy and Peace in Believing.

Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord who rises
With healing on His wings:

When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining,
To cheer it after rain.

In holy contemplation
We sweetly then pursue
The theme of God's salvation,
And find it ever new;
Set free from present sorrow,
We cheerfully can say,
E'en let the unknown to-morrow *
Bring with it what it may!

It can bring with it nothing,
But He will bear us through;
Who gives the lilies clothing,
Will clothe His people too;
Beneath the spreading heavens
No creature but is fed;
And He who feeds the ravens
Will give His children bread.

Though vine nor fig tree neither †
Their wonted fruit shall bear,
Though all the field should wither,
Nor flocks nor herds be there:
Yet God the same abiding,
His praise shall tune my voice;
For, while in Him confiding,
I cannot but rejoice.

XLIX. True Pleasures.

Lord, my soul with pleasure springs
When Jesu's name I hear;
And when God the Spirit brings
The word of promise near:
Beauties too, in holiness,
Still delighted I perceive;
Nor have words that can express
The joys Thy precepts give.

Clothed in sanctity and grace,
How sweet it is to see
Those who love Thee as they pass,
Or when they wait on Thee.

* Matthew vi. 34. † Habakkuk iii. 17, 18.

Pleasant too to sit and tell
What we owe to love Divine;
Till our bosoms grateful swell,
And eyes begin to shine.

Those the comforts I possess,
Which God shall still increase,
All His ways are pleasantness,*
And all His paths are peace.
Nothing Jesus did or spoke,
Henceforth let me ever slight;
For I love His easy yoke,†
And find His burden light.

L. THE CHRISTIAN.

HONOUR and happiness unite
To make the Christian's name a praise;
How fair the scene, how clear the light,
That fills the remnant of His days!

A kingly character He bears,
No change His priestly office knows;
Unfading is the crown He wears,
His joys can never reach a close.

Adorn'd with glory from on high,
Salvation shines upon His face;
His robe is of the ethereal dye,
His steps are dignity and grace.

Inferior honours He disdains,
Nor stoops to take applause from earth;
The King of kings Himself maintains
The expenses of His heavenly birth.

The noblest creature seen below,
Ordain'd to fill a throne above;
God gives him all He can bestow,
His kingdom of eternal love!

My soul is ravish'd at the thought!
Methinks from earth I see Him rise!
Angels congratulate His lot,
And shout Him welcome to the skies!

* Prov. iii. 17. † Matt. xi. 30.

LI. Lively Hope and Gracious Fear.

I was a grovelling creature once,
And basely cleaved to earth;
I wanted spirit to renounce
The clod that gave me birth.

But God hath breathed upon a worm,
And sent me from above
Wings such as clothe an angel's form,
The wings of joy and love.

With these to Pisgah's top I fly
And there delighted stand,
To view, beneath a shining sky,
The spacious promised land.

The Lord of all the vast domain
Has promised it to me,
The length and breadth of all the plain
As far as faith can see.

How glorious is my privilege!
To Thee for help I call;
I stand upon a mountain's edge,
Oh save me, lest I fall!

Though much exalted in the Lord,
My strength is not my own;
Then let me tremble at His word,
And none shall cast me down.

LII. For the Poor

When Hagar found the bottle spent
And wept o'er Ishmael,
A message from the Lord was sent
To guide her to a well.*

Should not Elijah's cake and cruse†
Convince us at this day,
A gracious God will not refuse
Provisions by the way?

His saints and servants shall be fed,
The promise is secure;
"Bread shall be given them," as He said,
"Their water shall be sure."‡

* Genesis xxi. 19. † 1 Kings xvii. 14.
‡ Isaiah xxxiii. 16.

Repasts far richer they shall prove,
  Than all earth's dainties are;
'Tis sweet to taste a Saviour's love,
  Though in the meanest fare.

To Jesus then your trouble bring,
  Nor murmur at your lot;
While you are poor and He is King,
  You shall not be forgot.

LIII. My Soul Thirsteth for God.

I thirst, but not as once I did,
  The vain delights of earth to share;
Thy wounds, Emmanuel, all forbid
  That I should seek my pleasures there.

It was the sight of Thy dear cross
  First wean'd my soul from earthly things;
And taught me to esteem as dross
  The mirth of fools and pomp of kings.

I want that grace that springs from Thee,
  That quickens all things where it flows,
And makes a wretched thorn like me
  Bloom as the myrtle, or the rose.

Dear fountain of delight unknown!
  No longer sink below the brim;
But overflow, and pour me down
  A living and life-giving stream!

For sure of all the plants that share
  The notice of thy Father's eye,
None proves less grateful to His care,
  Or yields him meaner fruit than I.

LIV. Love Constrained to Obedience.

No strength of nature can suffice
  To serve the Lord aright:
And what she has she misapplies,
  For want of clearer light.

How long beneath the law I lay
  In bondage and distress;
I toil'd the precept to obey,
  But toil'd without success.

Then, to abstain from outward sin
  Was more than I could do;
Now, if I feel its power within,
  I feel I hate it too.

Then all my servile works were done
A righteousness to raise;
Now, freely chosen in the Son,
I freely choose His ways.

"What shall I do," was then the word,
"That I may worthier grow?"
"What shall I render to the Lord?"
Is my inquiry now.

To see the law by Christ fulfill'd
And hear His pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child,*
And duty into choice.

LV. The Heart Healed and Changed by Mercy.

Sin enslaved me many years,
And led me bound and blind;
Till at length a thousand fears
Came swarming o'er my mind.
"Where," said I, in deep distress,
"Will these sinful pleasures end?
How shall I secure my peace,
And make the Lord my friend?"

Friends and ministers said much
The gospel to enforce;
But my blindness still was such,
I chose a legal course:
Much I fasted, watch'd, and strove,
Scarce would shew my face abroad,
Fear'd almost to speak or move,
A stranger still to God.

Thus afraid to trust His grace,
Long time did I rebel;
Till despairing of my case,
Down at His feet I fell:
Then my stubborn heart He broke,
And subdued me to His sway;
By a simple word He spoke,
"Thy sins are done away."

LVI. Hatred of Sin.

Holy Lord God! I love Thy truth,
Nor dare Thy least commandment slight;
Yet pierced by sin, the serpent's tooth,
I mourn the anguish of the bite.

* Romans viii. 14.

But though the poison lurks within,
Hope bids me still with patience wait;
Till death shall set me free from sin,
Free from the only thing I hate.

Had I a throne above the rest,
Where angels and archangels dwell,
One sin, unslain, within my breast,
Would make that heaven as dark as hell.

The prisoner sent to breathe fresh air,
And blest with liberty again,
Would mourn were he condemn'd to wear
One link of all his former chain.

But, oh! no foe invades the bliss,
When glory crowns the Christian's head;
One view of Jesus as He is
Will strike all sin for ever dead.

LVII. The New Convert.

The new-born child of gospel grace,
Like some fair tree when summer's nigh,
Beneath Emmanuel's shining face
Lifts up his blooming branch on high.

No fears he feels, he sees no foes,
No conflict yet his faith employs,
Nor has he learnt to whom he owes
The strength and peace his soul enjoys.

But sin soon darts its cruel sting,
And comforts sinking day by day,
What seem'd his own, a self-fed spring,
Proves but a brook that glides away.

When Gideon arm'd his numerous host,
The Lord soon made his numbers less;
And said, "Lest Israel vainly boast,*
My arm procured me this success!"

Thus will He bring our spirits down,
And draw our ebbing comforts low,
That saved by grace, but not our own,
We may not claim the praise we owe.

* Judges vii. 2.

LVIII. True and False Comforts.

O God, whose favourable eye,
The sin-sick soul revives,
Holy and heavenly is the joy
Thy shining presence gives.

Not such as hypocrites suppose,
Who with a graceless heart
Taste not of Thee, but drink a dose,
Prepared by Satan's art.

Intoxicating joys are theirs,
Who while they boast their light,
And seem to soar above the stars,
Are plunging into night.

Lull'd in a soft and fatal sleep,
They sin and yet rejoice;
Were they indeed the Saviour's sheep,
Would they not hear his voice?

Be mine the comforts that reclaim
The soul from Satan's power;
That make me blush for what I am,
And hate my sin the more.

'Tis joy enough, my All in All,
At Thy dear feet to lie;
Thou wilt not let me lower fall,
And none can higher fly.

LIX. A Living and a Dead Faith.

The Lord receives his highest praise
From humble minds and hearts sincere;
While all the loud professor says
Offends the righteous Judge's ear.

To walk as children of the day,
To mark the precepts' holy light,
To wage the warfare, watch, and pray,
Show who are pleasing in His sight.

Not words alone it cost the Lord,
To purchase pardon for His own;
Nor will a soul by grace restored
Return the Saviour words alone.

With golden bells, the priestly vest,
And rich pomegranates border'd round,*
The need of holiness express'd,
And call'd for fruit as well as sound.

* Exodus xxviii. 33.

Easy indeed it were to reach
  A mansion in the courts above,
If swelling words and fluent speech
  Might serve instead of faith and love.

But none shall gain the blissful place,
  Or God's unclouded glory see,
Who talks of free and sovereign grace,
  Unless that grace has made him free!

LX. ABUSE OF THE GOSPEL.

Too many, Lord, abuse Thy grace
  In this licentious day,
And while they boast they see Thy face,
  They turn their own away.

Thy book displays a gracious light
  That can the blind restore;
But these are dazzled by the sight,
  And blinded still the more.

The pardon such presume upon,
  They do not beg but steal;
And when they plead it at Thy throne,
  Oh! where's the Spirit's seal?

Was it for this, ye lawless tribe,
  The dear Redeemer bled?
Is this the grace the saints imbibe
  From Christ the living head?

Ah, Lord, we know Thy chosen few
  Are fed with heavenly fare;
But these,—the wretched husks they chew,
  Proclaim them what they are.

The liberty our hearts implore
  Is not to live in sin;
But still to wait at Wisdom's door,
  Till Mercy calls us in.

LXI. THE NARROW WAY.

WHAT thousands never knew the road!
  What thousands hate it when 'tis known!
None but the chosen tribes of God
  Will seek or choose it for their own.

A thousand ways in ruin end,
  One only leads to joys on high;
By that my willing steps ascend,
  Pleased with a journey to the sky.

No more I ask or hope to find
Delight or happiness below;
Sorrow may well possess the mind
That feeds where thorns and thistles grow

The joy that fades is not for me,
I seek immortal joys above;
There glory without end shall be
The bright reward of faith and love.

Cleave to the world, ye sordid worms,
Contented lick your native dust!
But God shall fight with all his storms,
Against the idol of your trust.

LXII. Dependence.

To keep the lamp alive,
With oil we fill the bowl;
'Tis water makes the willow thrive,
And grace that feeds the soul.

The Lord's unsparing hand
Supplies the living stream;
It is not at our own command,
But still derived from Him.

Beware of Peter's word,*
Nor confidently say,
"I never will deny Thee, Lord,"—
But,—"Grant I never may."

Man's wisdom is to seek
His strength in God alone;
And e'en an angel would be weak,
Who trusted in his own.

Retreat beneath His wings,
And in His grace confide!
This more exalts the King of kings,†
Than all your works beside.

In Jesus is our store,
Grace issues from His throne;
Whoever says, "I want no more,"
Confesses he has none.

---

* Matthew xxvi. 33. † John vi. 29.

LXIII. Not of Works.

Grace, triumphant in the throne,
Scorns a rival, reigns alone;
Come and bow beneath her sway!
Cast your idol works away!
Works of man, when made his plea,
Never shall accepted be;
Fruits of pride (vain-glorious worm!)
Are the best he can perform.

Self, the god his soul adores,
Influences all his powers;
Jesus is a slighted name,
Self-advancement all his aim:
But when God the Judge shall come,
To pronounce the final doom,
Then for rocks and hills to hide
All his works and all his pride!

Still the boasting heart replies,
What the worthy and the wise,
Friends to temperance and peace,
Have not these a righteousness?
Banish every vain pretence
Built on human excellence;
Perish every thing in man,
But the grace that never can.

LXIV. Praise for Faith.

Of all the gifts Thine hand bestows,
Thou Giver of all good!
Not heaven itself a richer knows
Than my Redeemer's blood.

Faith too, the blood-receiving grace,
From the same hand we gain;
Else, sweetly as it suits our case,
That gift had been in vain.

Till Thou Thy teaching power apply,
Our hearts refuse to see,
And weak, as a distemper'd eye,
Shut out the view of Thee.

Blind to the merits of Thy Son,
What misery we endure!
Yet fly that Hand from which alone
We could expect a cure.

We praise Thee, and would praise Thee more,
To Thee our all we owe;
The precious Saviour, and the power
That makes Him precious too.

LXV. Grace and Providence.

Almighty King! whose wondrous hand
Supports the weight of sea and land;
Whose grace is such a boundless store,
No heart shall break that sighs for more.

Thy providence supplies my food,
And 'tis Thy blessing makes it good;
My soul is nourish'd by Thy Word,
Let soul and body praise the Lord!

My streams of outward comfort came
From Him who built this earthly frame;
Whate'er I want His bounty gives,
By whom my soul for ever lives.

Either His hand preserves from pain,
Or, if I feel it, heals again;
From Satan's malice shields my breast,
Or overrules it for the best.

Forgive the song that falls so low
Beneath the gratitude I owe!
It means Thy praise, however poor,
An angel's song can do no more.

LXVI. I will Praise the Lord at all Times.

Winter has a joy for me,
While the Saviour's charms I read,
Lowly, meek, from blemish free,
In the snowdrop's pensive head.

Spring returns, and brings along
Life-invigorating suns:
Hark! the turtle's plaintive song
Seems to speak His dying groans!

Summer has a thousand charms,
All expressive of His worth;
'Tis His sun that lights and warms,
His the air that cools the earth.

What! has autumn left to say
Nothing of a Saviour's grace?
Yes, the beams of milder day
Tell me of His smiling face.

Light appears with early dawn,
While the sun makes haste to rise;
See His bleeding beauties drawn
On the blushes of the skies.

Evening with a silent pace,
Slowly moving in the west,
Shews an emblem of His grace,
Points to an eternal rest.

LXVII. Longing to be with Christ.

To Jesus, the crown of my hope,
My soul is in haste to be gone;
Oh bear me, ye cherubim, up,
And waft me away to His throne!

My Saviour, whom absent I love,
Whom, not having seen I adore;
Whose name is exalted above
All glory, dominion, and power;

Dissolve thou these bonds that detain
My soul from her portion in thee,
Ah! strike off this adamant chain,
And make me eternally free.

When that happy era begins,
When arrayed in Thy glories I shine,
Nor grieve any more, by my sins,
The bosom on which I recline.

Oh then shall the veil be removed,
And round me Thy brightness be pour'd,
I shall meet Him whom absent I loved,
Shall see Him whom unseen I adored.

And then, never more shall the fears,
The trials, temptations, and woes,
Which darken this valley of tears,
Intrude on my blissful repose.

Or, if yet remember'd above,
Remembrance no sadness shall raise,
They will be but new signs of Thy love,
New themes for my wonder and praise.

Thus the strokes which from sin and from pain
Shall set me eternally free,
Will but strengthen and r[illegible]et the chain
Which binds me, my Saviour, to Thee.

LXVIII. Light Shining out of Darkness.*

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,†
And scan His work in vain:
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

* [Com]posed June, 1773, on the eve of Cowper's renewed insanity.
† John xiii. 7.



ANTI-THELYPHTHORA.

A TALE IN VERSE*

1781.

Printed anonymously.

> Ah miser
> Quantâ laboras in Charybdi!
> HORACE, lib. i. Ode 27.

AIRY DEL CASTRO was as bold a knight
As ever earn'd a lady's love in fight.
Many he sought, but one above the rest
His tender heart victoriously impress'd:
In fairy land was born the matchless dame,
The land of dreams, Hypothesis her name.
There Fancy nursed her in ideal bowers,
And laid her soft in amaranthine flowers;
Delighted with her babe, the enchantress smiled,
And graced with all her gifts the favourite child.
Her wooed Sir Airy, by meandering streams,
In daily musings and in nightly dreams;
With all the flowers he found, he wove in haste
Wreaths for her brow, and girdles for her waist;
His time, his talents, and his ceaseless care
All consecrated to adorn the fair;
No pastime but with her he deign'd to take,
And,—if he studied, studied for her sake.
And, for Hypothesis was somewhat long,
Nor soft enough to suit a lover's tongue,
He call'd her Posy, with an amorous art,
And graved it on a gem, and wore it next his heart.
But she, inconstant as the beams that play
On rippling waters in an April day,
With many a freakish trick deceived his pains,
To pathless wilds and unfrequented plains

---

* A cousin of Cowper's, the Rev. Martin Madan, had published a book called "Thelyphthora," advocating polygamy! It was severely criticised in the "Monthly Review," by the Rev. Mr. Badcock. Madan answered him, and received a reply in the "Review." Cowper in this poem represents the disputants as two knights jousting.

Enticed him from his oaths of knighthood far,
Forgetful of the glorious toils of war.
'Tis thus the tenderness that love inspires
Too oft betrays the votaries of his fires;
Borne far away on elevated wings,
They sport like wanton doves in airy rings,
And laws and duties are neglected things.
Nor he alone address'd the wayward fair;
Full many a knight had been entangled there.
But still, whoever wooed her or embraced,
On every mind some mighty spell she cast,
Some she would teach (for she was wondrous wise,
And made her dupes see all things with her eyes,)
That forms material, whatsoe'er we dream,
Are not at all, or are not what they seem;
That substances and modes of every kind
Are mere impressions on the passive mind:
And he that splits his cranium, breaks at most
A fancied head against a fancied post;
Others, that earth, ere sin had drown'd it all,
Was smooth and even as an ivory ball;
That all the various beauties we survey,
Hills, valleys, rivers, and the boundless sea,
Are but departures from the first design,
Effects of punishment and wrath divine.
She tutor'd some in Dædalus's art,
And promised they should act his wildgoose part,
On waxen pinions soar without a fall,
Swift as the proudest gander of them all.
But fate reserved Sir Airy to maintain
The wildest project of her teeming brain;—
That wedlock is not rigorous as supposed,
But man, within a wider pale enclosed,
May rove at will, where appetite shall lead,
Free as the lordly bull that ranges o'er the mead;
That forms and rites are tricks of human law,
As idle as the chattering of a daw;
That lewd incontinence, and lawless rape,
Are marriage in its true and proper shape;
That man by faith and truth is made a slave,
The ring a bauble, and the priest a knave.
"Fair fall the deed!" the knight exulting cried,
"Now is the time to make the maid a bride!"
'Twas on the noon of an autumnal day,
October hight, but mild and fair as May;
When scarlet fruits the russet hedge adorn,
And floating films envelop every thorn;

When gently as in June, the rivers glide,
And only miss the flowers that graced their side;
The linnet twitter'd out his parting song,
With many a chorister the woods among;
On southern banks the ruminating sheep
Lay snug and warm;—'twas summer's farewell peep.
Propitious to his fond intent there grew,
An arbour near at hand of thickest yew,
With many a boxen bush, close clipt between,
And phillyrea of a gild'd green.
  But what old Chaucer's merry page befits,
The chaster muse of modern days omits.
Suffice it then in decent terms to say,
She saw,—and turn'd her rosy cheek away.
Small need of prayer-book or of priest, I ween,
Where parties are agreed, retired the scene,
Occasion prompt, and appetite so keen.
Hypothesis (for with such magic power
Fancy endued her in her natal hour,)
From many a steaming lake and reeking bog,
Bade rise in haste a dank and drizzling fog,
That curtain'd round the scene where they reposed,
And wood and lawn in dusky folds enclosed.
  Fear seiz'd the trembling sex; in every grove
They wept the wrongs of honourable love,
"In vain," they cried, "are hymeneal rites,
Vain our delusive hope of constant knights;
The marriage bond has lost its powers to bind,
And flutters loose, the sport of every wind.
The bride, while yet her bride's attire is on,
Shall mourn her absent lord, for he is gone,
Satiate of her, and weary of the same,
To distant wilds in quest of other game.
Ye fair Circassians! all your lutes employ,
Seraglios sing, and harems dance for joy!
For British nymphs whose lords were lately true,
Nymphs quite as fair, and happier once than you,
Honour, esteem, and confidence forgot,
Feel all the meanness of your slavish lot.
O curst Hypothesis! your hellish arts
Seduce our husbands, and estrange their hearts.—
Will none arise? no knight who still retains
The blood of ancient worthies in his veins,
To assert the charter of the chaste and fair,
Find out her treacherous heart, and plant a dagger there?"
A knight—(can he that serves the fair do less?)
Starts at the call of beauty in distress;

And he that does not, whatsoe'er occurs,
Is recreant, and unworthy of his spurs.*
Full many a champion, bent on hardy deed,
Call'd for his arms and for his princely steed.
So swarm'd the Sabine youth, and grasp'd the shield,
When Roman rapine, by no laws withheld,
Lest Rome should end with her first founders' lives,
Made half their maids, *sans* ceremony, wives.
But not the mitred few; the soul their charge;
They left these bodily concerns at large;
Forms or no forms, pluralities or pairs,
Right reverend sirs! was no concern of theirs.
The rest, alert and active as became
A courteous knighthood, caught the generous flame:
One was accoutred when the cry began,
Knight of the Silver Moon, Sir Marmadan.†
Oft as his patroness, who rules the night,
Hangs out her lamp in yon cerulean height,
His vow was, (and he well perform'd his vow,)
Arm'd at all points, with terror on his brow,
To judge the land, to purge atrocious crimes,
And quell the shapeless monsters of the times.
For cedars famed, fair Lebanon supplied
The well-poised lance that quiver'd at his side;
Truth arm'd it with a point so keen, so just,
No spell or charm was proof against the thrust.
He couch'd it firm upon his puissant thigh,
And darting through his helm an eagle's eye,
On all the wings of chivalry advanced
To where the fond Sir Airy lay entranced.
He dreamt not of a foe, or if his fear
Foretold one, dreamt not of a foe so near.
Far other dreams his feverish mind employ'd,
Of rights restored, variety enjoy'd:
Of virtue too well fenced to fear a flaw;
Vice passing current by the stamp of law;
Large population on a liberal plan,
And woman trembling at the foot of man;
How simple wedlock fornication works,
And Christians marrying may convert the Turks.
The trumpet now spoke Marmadan at hand,
A trumpet that was heard through all the land.
His high-bred steed expands his nostrils wide,
And snorts aloud to cast the mist aside;

* When a knight was degraded, his spurs were chopped off.—C.
† Mr. Badcock in *Monthly Review* for October, 1780.—C.

But he, the virtues of his lance to show,
Struck thrice the point upon his saddle-bow;
Three sparks ensued that chased it all away,
And set the unseemly pair in open day.
"To horse!" he cried, "or, by this good right hand
And better spear, I smite you where you stand."
Sir Airy, not a whit dismay'd or scared,
Buckled his helm, and to his steed repair'd;
Whose bridle, while he cropp'd the grass below,
Hung not far off upon a myrtle bough.
He mounts at once,—such confidence infused
The insidious witch that had his wits abused;
And she, regardless of her softer kind,
Seized fast the saddle and sprang up behind.
"Oh shame to knighthood!" his assailant cried;
"Oh shame!" ten thousand echoing nymphs replied.
Placed with advantage at his listening ear,
She whisper'd still that he had nought to fear;
That he was cased in such enchanted steel,
So polish'd and compact from head to heel,
'Come ten, come twenty, should an army call
Thee to the field, thou shouldst withstand them all."
"By Dian's beams," Sir Marmadan exclaim'd,
"The guiltless still are ever least ashamed!
But guard thee well, expect no feign'd attack;
And guard beside the sorceress at thy back!"
He spoke indignant, and his spurs applied,
Though little need, to his good palfrey's side:
The barb sprang forward, and his lord, whose force
Was equal to the swiftness of his horse,
Rush'd with a whirlwind's fury on the foe,
And, Phineas like, transfix'd them at a blow.
Then sang the married and the maiden throng,
Love graced the theme, and harmony the song;
The Fauns and Satyrs, a lascivious race,
Shriek'd at the sight, and, conscious, fled the place:
And Hymen, trimming his dim torch anew,
His snowy mantle o'er his shoulders threw;
He turn'd, and view'd it oft on every side,
And reddening with a just and generous pride,
Bless'd the glad beams of that propitious day,
The spot he loathed so much for ever cleansed away.*

* Cowper never included this poem in his works. Southey discovered it by finding a note (in a book he was reading) from S. Rose, a friend of Cowper's, stating that such a poem had been written by the "Author of The Task."

LOVE ABUSED;

THE THOUGHT SUGGESTED BY THELYPHTHORÀ.

WHAT is there in the vale of life
Half so delightful as a Wife,
When friendship, love, and peace combine
To stamp the marriage-bond divine?
The stream of pure and genuine love
Derives its current from above;
And earth a second Eden shows,
Where'er the healing water flows:
But ah! if from the dykes and drains
Of sensual nature's feverish veins,
Lust, like a lawless headstrong flood,
Impregnated with ooze and mud,
Descending fast on every side,
Once mingles with the sacred tide,
Farewell the soul-enlivening scene!
The banks that wore a smiling green,
With rank defilement overspread,
Bewail their flowery beauties dead.
The stream polluted, dark, and dull,
Diffused into a Stygian pool,
Through life's last melancholy years
Is fed with ever-flowing tears:
Complaints supply the zephyr's part,
And sighs that heave a breaking heart.



THE PROGRESS OF ERROR.

Si quid loquar audiendum.—*Hor.* lib. iv. Od. 2.

Sing, Muse, (if such a theme, so dark, so long,
May find a Muse to grace it with a song)
By what unseen and unsuspected arts
The serpent Error twines round human hearts;
Tell where she lurks, beneath what flowery shades,
That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,
The poisonous, black, insinuating worm
Successfully conceals her loathsome form.
Take, if you can, ye careless and supine,
Counsel and caution from a voice like mine!
Truths that the theorist could never reach,
And observation taught me, I would teach.
Not all whose eloquence the fancy fills,
Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,
Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,
Can trace her mazy windings to their end.
Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,
Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.
The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,
Falls soporific on the listless ear;
Like quicksilver, the rhetoric they display
Shines as it runs, but grasped at, slips away.
Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,
From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
Free in his will to choose or to refuse,
Man may improve the crisis, or abuse;
Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
Say to what bar amenable were man?
With naught in charge, he could betray no trust,
And if he fell, would fall because he must;
If Love reward him, or if Vengeance strike,
His recompense in both unjust alike.
Divine authority within his breast
Brings every thought, word, action, to the test;
Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains,
As Reason, or as Passion, takes the reins.
Heaven from above, and Conscience from within,
Cry in his startled ear, "Abstain from sin!"

The world around solicits his desire,
And kindles in his soul a treacherous fire,
While, all his purposes and steps to guard,
Peace follows Virtue as its sure reward,
And Pleasure brings as surely in her train,
Remorse, and Sorrow, and vindictive Pain.
Man thus endued with an elective voice,
Must be supplied with objects of his choice;
Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,
Or present, or in prospect, meet his sight;
These open on the spot their honeyed store,
Those call him loudly to pursuit of more.
His unexhausted mine, the sordid vice
Avarice shows, and virtue is the price;
Here various motives his ambition raise,
Power, Pomp, and Splendour, and the Thirst of Praise;
There Beauty woos him with expanded arms;
Even Bacchanalian Madness has its charms.
Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refined
Might well alarm the most unguarded mind,
Seek to supplant his inexperienced youth,
Or lead him devious from the path of truth;
Hourly allurements on his passions press,
Safe in themselves, but dangerous in the excess.
Hark! how it floats upon the dewy air!
Oh what a dying, dying close was there!
'Tis Harmony from yon sequester'd bower.
Sweet Harmony that soothes the midnight hour;
Long ere the charioteer of day had run
His morning course, the enchantment was begun,
And he shall gild yon mountain's height again,
Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain.
Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent,
That Virtue points to? Can a life thus spent
Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,
Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the skies?
Ye devotees to your adored employ,
Enthusiasts drunk with an unreal joy,
Love makes the music of the blest above,
Heaven's harmony is universal love,
And earthly sounds, though sweet and well combined,
And lenient as soft opiates to the mind,
Leave Vice and Folly unsubdued behind.
Grey dawn appears; the sportsman and his train
Speckle the bosom of the distant plain;
'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighbouring lairs,—
Save that his scent is less acute than theirs,

For persevering chase, and headlong leaps,—
True beagle as the stanchest hound he keeps.
Charged with the folly of his life's mad scene,
He takes offence, and wonders what you mean;
The joy, the danger and the toil o'erpays;
'Tis exercise, and health, and length of days;
Again impetuous to the field he flies,
Leaps every fence but one, there falls and dies;
Like a slain deer, the tumbril brings him home,
Unmissed but by his dogs and by his groom.
Ye clergy, while your orbit is your place,
Lights of the world, and stars of human race;
But if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,
Prodigies ominous, and viewed with fear;
The comet's baneful influence is a dream,
Yours real, and pernicious in the extreme.
What then!—are appetites and lusts laid down
With the same ease the man puts on his gown?
Will Avarice and Concupiscence give place,
Charmed by the sounds, "Your Reverence," or "Your Grace?"
No. But his own engagement binds him fast,
Or, if it does not, brands him to the last
What atheists call him, a designing knave,
A mere church-juggler, hypocrite, and slave.
Oh laugh or mourn with me, the rueful jest,
A cassocked huntsman, and a fiddling priest!
He from Italian songsters takes his cue;
Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.
He takes the field, the master of the pack
Cries—"Well done, Saint!" and claps him on the back.
Is this the path of sanctity? Is this
To stand a way-mark in the road to bliss?
Himself a wanderer from the narrow way,
His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray?
Go, cast your orders at your Bishop's feet,
Send your dishonoured gown to Monmouth Street,*
The sacred function, in your hands is made—
Sad sacrilege! no function, but a trade!
Occiduus is a pastor of renown;
When he has prayed and preached the Sabbath down,
With wire and catgut he concludes the day,
Quavering and semiquavering care away.
The full concerto swells upon your ear;
All elbows shake. Look in, and you would swear
The Babylonian tyrant with a nod

* Here lived the dealers in old clothes.

Had summoned them to serve his golden god;
So well that thought the employment seems to suit.
Psaltery and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.
Oh fie! 'Tis evangelical and pure;
Observe each face, how sober and demure!
Ecstasy sets her stamp on every mien,
Chins fallen, and not an eye-ball to be seen.
Still I insist, though music heretofore
Has charmed me much (not even Occiduus more)
Love, joy, and peace make harmony more meet
For sabbath evenings, and perhaps as sweet.
Will not the sickliest sheep of every flock
Resort to this example as a rock,
There stand, and justify the foul abuse
Of sabbath hours with plausible excuse?
If apostolic gravity be free
To play the fool on Sundays, why not we?
If he the tinkling harpsichord regards
As inoffensive, what offence in cards?
Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay!
Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.
O Italy!—Thy sabbaths will be soon
Our sabbaths, closed with mummery and buffoon;
Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene.
Ours parcelled out, as thine have ever been,
God's worship and the mountebank between.
What says the prophet? Let that day be blest
With holiness and consecrated rest;
Pastime and business both, it should exclude,
And bar the door the moment they intrude;
Nobly distinguished above all the six,
By deeds in which the world must never mix.
Hear him again. He calls it a delight,
A day of luxury, observed aright,
When the glad soul is made Heaven's welcome guest
Sits banqueting, and God provides the feast.
But triflers are engaged and cannot come;
Their answer to the call is—"Not at home."
O the dear pleasures of the velvet plain,
The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again!
Cards, with what rapture, and the polished die,
The yawning chasm of indolence supply!
Then to the dance, and make the sober moon
Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.
Blame, cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball,
The snug, close party, or the splendid hall,
Where Night, down-stooping from her ebon throne

Views constellations brighter than her own.
'Tis innocent, and harmless, and refined,
The balm of care, Elysium of the mind.
Innocent! Oh! if venerable Time
Slain at the foot of Pleasure be no crime,
Then, with his silver beard and magic wand,
Let Comus rise Archbishop of the land,
Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe,
Grand Metropolitan of all the tribe.
  Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast,
The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste,
Rufillus, exquisitely formed by rule,
Not of the moral, but the dancing school,
Wonders at Clodio's follies, in a tone
As tragical, as others at his own.
He cannot drink five bottles, bilk the score,
Then kill a constable, and drink five more,
But he can draw a pattern, make a tart,
And has the Ladies' Etiquette by heart.
Go, fool; and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead
Your cause before a bar you little dread;
But know, the law that bids the drunkard die,
Is far too just to pass the trifler by.
Both baby-featured, and of infant size,
Viewed from a distance, and with heedless eyes,
Folly and Innocence are so alike,
The difference, though essential, fails to strike.
Yet Folly ever has a vacant stare,
A simpering countenance, and a trifling air;
But Innocence, sedate, serene, erect,
Delights us, by engaging our respect.
  Man, Nature's guest by invitation sweet,
Receives from her both appetite and treat;
But, if he play the glutton and exceed,
His benefactress blushes at the deed,
For Nature, nice, as liberal to dispense,
Made nothing but a brute, the slave of sense.
Daniel ate pulse by choice—example rare!
Heaven blessed the youth, and made him fresh and fair;
Gorgonius sits, abdominous and wan,
Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan;
He snuffs far off the anticipated joy,
Turtle and venison all his thoughts employ
Prepares for meals as jockeys take a sweat,
O nauseous!—an emetic for a whet!
Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good?
Temperance were no virtue if He could.

That pleasures, therefore, or what such we call,
Are hurtful is a truth confessed by all;
And some that seem to threaten virtue less,
Still hurtful in the abuse, or by the excess.
Is man then only for his torment placed,
The centre of delights he may not taste?
Like fabled Tantalus, condemned to hear
The precious stream still purling in his ear,
Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst
With prohibition and perpetual thirst?
No, wrangler,—destitute of shame and sense,
The precept that enjoins him abstinence,
Forbids him none but the licentious joy,
Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.
Remorse, the fatal egg by Pleasure laid
In every bosom where her nest is made,
Hatched by the beams of truth, denies him rest,
And proves a raging scorpion in his breast.
No pleasure! Are domestic comforts dead?
Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled?
Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame,
Good sense, good health, good conscience, and good fame?
All these belong to virtue, and all prove
That virtue has a title to your love.
Have you no touch of pity that the poor
Stand starved at your inhospitable door?
Or if yourself, too scantily supplied,
Need help, let honest industry provide.
Earn, if you want; if you abound, impart;
These both are pleasures to the feeling heart.
No pleasure! Has some sickly eastern waste
Sent us a wind to parch us at a blast?
Can British Paradise no scenes afford
To please her sated and indifferent lord?
Are sweet philosophy's enjoyments run
Quite to the lees? And has religion none?
Brutes capable would tell you 'tis a lie,
And judge you from the kennel and the sty.
Delights like these, ye sensual and profane,
Ye are bid, begged, besought to entertain;
Called to these crystal streams, do ye turn off,
Obscene, to swill and swallow at a trough?
Envy the beast, then, on whom Heaven bestows
Your pleasures, with no curses in the close.
Pleasure admitted in undue degree
Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free.
'Tis not alone the grape's enticing juice

Unnerves the moral powers, and mars their use;
Ambition, avarice, and the lust of fame,
And woman, lovely woman, does the same.
The heart, surrendered to the ruling power
Of some ungoverned passion every hour,
Finds, by degrees, the truths that once bore sway,
And all their deep impression, wear away;
So coin grows smooth, in traffic current passed,
Till Cæsar's image is effaced at last.
The breach, though small at first, soon opening wide,
In rushes Folly with a full moon tide,
Then welcome errors, of whatever size,
To justify it by a thousand lies.
As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone,
And hides the ruin that it feeds upon,
So sophistry cleaves close to and protects
Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects.
Mortals whose pleasures are their only care,
First wish to be imposed on, and then are.
And lest the fulsome artifice should fail,
Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil.
Not more industrious are the just and true
To give to Virtue what is Virtue's due;
The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth,
And call her charms to public notice forth;
Than Vice's mean and disingenuous race
To hide the shocking features of her face;
Her form with dress and lotion they repair,
Then kiss their idol, and pronounce her fair.
The sacred implement I now employ
Might prove a mischief, or at best a toy;
A trifle if it move but to amuse;
But if to wrong the judgment and abuse,
Worse than a poniard in the basest hand,
It stabs at once the morals of a land.
Ye writers of what none with safety reads,
Footing it in the dance that fancy leads,
Ye novelists, who mar what ye would mend,
Snivelling and drivelling folly without end,
Whose corresponding misses fill the ream
With sentimental frippery and dream,
Caught in a delicate, soft, silken net,
By some lewd earl, or rakehell baronet;
Ye pimps, who, under virtue's fair pretence,
Steal to the closet of young innocence,
And teach her, inexperienced yet and green,
To scribble as you scribbled at fifteen

Who, kindling a combustion of desire,
With some cold moral think to quench the fire;
Though all your engineering proves in vain,
The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again:
Oh that a verse had power, and could command
Far, far away, these flesh-flies of the land,
Who fasten without mercy on the fair,
And suck and leave a craving maggot there!
Howe'er disguised the inflammatory tale,
And covered with a fine-spun, specious veil,
Such writers, and such readers, owe the gust
And relish of their pleasure all to lust.
But the Muse, eagle-pinioned, has in view
A quarry more important still than you;
Down, down the wind, she swims, and sails away,
Now stoops upon it, and now grasps the prey.
Petronius!* all the Muses weep for thee;
But every tear shall scald thy memory:
The Graces too, while Virtue at their shrine
Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,
Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,
Abhorred the sacrifice, and cursed the priest.
Thou polished and high-finished foe to truth,
Greybeard corrupter of our listening youth,
To purge and skim away the filth of vice,
That, so refined, it might the more entice,
Then pour it on the morals of thy son,
To taint his heart, was worthy of thine own!
Now, while the poison all high life pervades,
Write, if thou canst, one letter from the shades,
One, and one only, charged with deep regret,
That thy worst part, thy principles, live yet;
One sad epistle thence, may cure mankind
Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.
'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears,
Our most important are our earliest years;
The Mind, impressible and soft, with ease
Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,
And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clue
That Education gives her, false or true.
Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong:
Man's coltish disposition asks the thong,
And without discipline the favourite child,
Like a neglected forester, runs wild.
But we, as if good qualities would grow

* Lord Chesterfield. Cowper alludes in the following passage to the "Letters to his Son."

Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow;
We give some Latin, and a smatch of Greek,
Teach him to fence and figure twice a week,
And having done, we think, the best we can,
Praise his proficiency, and dub him man.
  From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home,
And thence with all convenient speed to Rome,
With reverend tutor, clad in habit lay,
To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day;
With memorandum-book for every town,
And every post, and where the chaise broke down;
His stock, a few French phrases got by heart,
With much to learn, but nothing to impart,
The youth, obedient to his sire's commands,
Sets off a wanderer into foreign lands;
Surprised at all they meet, the gosling pair,
With awkward gait, stretched neck, and silly stare,
Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,
And steeples towering high, much like our own,
But show peculiar light, by many a grin
At Popish practices observed within.
  Ere long some bowing, smirking, smart Abbé
Remarks two loiterers that have lost their way,
And being always primed with *politesse*
For men of their appearance and address,
With much compassion undertakes the task
To tell them more than they have wit to ask;
Points to inscriptions wheresoe'er they tread,
Such as, when legible, were never read,
But being cankered now, and half worn out,
Craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt;
Some headless hero, or some Cæsar, shows—
Defective only in his Roman nose;
Exhibits elevations, drawings, plans,
Models of Herculanean pots and pans,
And sells them medals, which, if neither rare
Nor ancient, will be so, preserved with care,
  Strange the recital! from whatever cause
His great improvement and new lights he draws,
The squire, once bashful, is shamefaced no more,
But teems with powers he never felt before;
Whether increased momentum, and the force
With which from clime to clime he sped his course,
As axles sometimes kindle as they go,
Chafed him, and brought dull nature to a glow;
Or whether clearer skies and softer air,
That make Italian flowers so sweet and fair,

Freshening his lazy spirits as he ran,
Unfolded genially and spread the man,
Returning, he proclaims, by many a grace,
By shrugs and strange contortions of his face,
How much a dunce that has been sent to roam,
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home.
Accomplishments have taken Virtue's place,
And Wisdom falls before exterior grace;
We slight the precious kernel of the stone,
And toil to polish its rough coat alone.
A just deportment, manners graced with ease,
Elegant phrase, and figure formed to please,
Are qualities that seem to comprehend
Whatever parents, guardians, schools, intend;
Hence an unfurnished and a listless mind,
Though busy, trifling; empty, though refined;
Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash
With indolence and luxury, is trash;
While learning, once the man's exclusive pride,
Seems verging fast towards the female side.
Learning itself, received into a mind
By nature weak, or viciously inclined,
Serves but to lead philosophers astray,
Where children would with ease discern the way;
And of all arts sagacious dupes invent,
To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
The worst is—Scripture warped from its intent.
The carriage bowls along and all are pleased,
If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greased,
But if the rogue be gone a cup too far,
Left out his linchpin, or forgot his tar,*
It suffers interruption and delay,
And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way.
When some hypothesis absurd and vain,
Has filled with all its fumes a critic's brain,
The text that sorts not with his darling whim,
Though plain to others, is obscure to him.
The Will made subject to a lawless force,
All is irregular, and out of course,
And Judgment drunk, and bribed to lose his way,
Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noonday.
A critic on the sacred book should be
Candid and learned, dispassionate and free;
Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,

* Wheels were greased with tar in the days of Cowper; the coachman was expected to take some with him on a journey.

From Fancy's influence, and intemperate Zeal;
But above all (or let the wretch refrain,
Nor touch the page he cannot but profane),
Free from the domineering power of Lust;
A lewd interpreter is never just.

How shall I speak thee, or thy power address,
Thou god of our idolatry, the Press?
By thee, Religion, Liberty, and Laws,
Exert their influence, and advance their cause:
By thee, worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befell,
Diffused, make Earth the vestibule of Hell;
Thou fountain at which drink the good and wise,
Thou ever bubbling spring of endless lies,
Like Eden's dread probationary tree,
Knowledge of good and evil is from thee.

No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest,
Till half mankind were like himself possessed.
Philosophers, who darken and put out
Eternal truth by everlasting doubt,
Church-quacks, with passions under no command,
Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
Discoverers of they know not what, confined
Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind,
To streams of popular opinion drawn,
Deposit in those shallows all their spawn.
The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around,
Poisoning the waters where their swarms abound;
Scorned by the nobler tenants of the flood,
Minnows and gudgeons gorge the unwholesome food;
The propagated myriads spread so fast,
E'en Leeuwenhoek* himself would stand aghast,
Employed to calculate the enormous sum,
And own his crab-computing powers o'ercome.
Is this hyperbole? The world well known,
Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.

Fresh confidence the speculatist takes
From every hair-brained proselyte he makes,
And therefore prints; himself but half deceived,
Till others have the soothing tale believed.
Hence comment after comment, spun as fine
As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line;
Hence the same word, that bids our lusts obey,
Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.
If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,

* Antony Von Leeuwenhoek, remarkable for the observations he made with the microscope. He lived from 1632 to 1723.

Hebrew, or Syriac, shall be forced to bend;
If languages and copies all cry "No!"
Somebody proved it centuries ago.
Like trout pursued, the critic in despair
Darts to the mud, and finds his safety there.
Women, whom custom has forbid to fly
The scholar's pitch (the scholar best knows why)
With all the simple and unlettered poor,
Admire his learning, and almost adore;
Whoever errs, the priest can ne'er be wrong,
With such fine words familiar to his tongue.
Ye ladies! (for, indifferent in your cause,
I should deserve to forfeit all applause)
Whatever shocks, or gives the least offence
To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense,
(Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide),
Nor has, nor can have, Scripture on its side.
None but an author knows an author's cares,
Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears.
Committed once into the public arms,
The baby seems to smile with added charms.
Like something precious ventured far from shore,
'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.
He views it with complacency supreme,
Solicits kind attention to his dream,
And daily more enamoured of the cheat,
Kneels and asks Heaven to bless the dear deceit;
So one,* whose story serves at least to show
Men loved their own productions long ago,
Wooed an unfeeling statue for his wife,
Nor rested till the Gods had given it life.
If some mere driveller suck the sugared fib,
One that still needs his leading string and bib,
And praise his genius, he is soon repaid
In praise applied to the same part—his head;
For 'tis a rule that holds for ever true,
Grant me discernment, and I grant it you.
Patient of contradiction as a child,
Affable, humble, diffident, and mild,
Such was Sir Isaac,† and such Boyle and Locke,
Your blunderer is as sturdy as a rock.
The creature is so sure to kick and bite,
A muleteer's the man to set him right.

* Pygmalion, a sculptor of Cyprus, who fell in love with a statue he had made. At his request Venus endowed it with life.

† Newton

First Appetite enlists him Truth's sworn foe,
Then obstinate Self-will confirms him so.
Tell him he wanders, that his error leads
To fatal ills; that though the path he treads
Be flowery, and he see no cause of fear,
Death and the pains of Hell attend him there;
In vain: the slave of arrogance and pride,
He has no hearing on the prudent side.
His still-refuted quirks he still repeats,
New raised objections with new quibbles meets,
Till sinking in the quicksand he defends,
He dies disputing, and the contest ends;
But not the mischiefs: they still left behind,
Like thistle-seeds, are sown by every wind.
  Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill,
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will,
And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
First put it out, then take it for a guide.
Halting on crutches of unequal size,
One leg by truth supported, one by lies,
They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
Secure of nothing, but to lose the race.
  Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these, reciprocally, those again.
The mind and conduct mutually imprint
And stamp their image in each other's mint;
Each sire and dam, of an infernal race,
Begetting and conceiving all that's base.
  None sends his arrow to the mark in view,
Whose hand is feeble, or his aim untrue.
For though, ere yet the shaft is on the wing
Or when it first forsakes the elastic string,
It err but little from the intended line,
It falls at last, far wide of his design;
So he who seeks a mansion in the sky,
Must watch his purpose with a stedfast eye,
That prize belongs to none but the sincere,
The least obliquity is fatal here.
  With caution taste the sweet Circean cup,
He that sips often, at last drinks it up.
Habits are soon assumed, but when we strive
To strip them off, 'tis being flayed alive.
Called to the temple of impure delight,
He that abstains, and he alone, does right.
If a wish wander that way, call it home,
He cannot long be safe whose wishes roam.
But if you pass the threshold, you are caught,

Die then, if power Almighty save you not.
There hardening by degrees, till double steeled,
Take leave of nature's God, and God revealed,
Then laugh at all you trembled at before,
And joining the freethinkers' brutal roar,
Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense—
That Scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense.
If clemency revolted by abuse
Be damnable, then damned without excuse.
Some dream that they can silence, when they will,
The storm of passion, and say, "Peace, be still!"
But, "Thus far and no farther," when addressed
To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,
Implies authority that never can,
That never ought to be the lot of man.
But, Muse, forbear; long flights forbode a fall,
Strike on the deep-toned chord the sum of all.
Hear the just law—the judgment of the skies!
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies;
And he that will be cheated to the last,
Delusions strong as Hell shall bind him fast.
But if the wanderer his mistake discern,
Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return,
Bewildered once, must he bewail his loss
For ever and for ever? No—the Cross!
There, and there only, (though the deist rave,
And atheist, if Earth bear so base a slave)
There, and there only, is the power to save.
There no delusive hope invites despair,
No mockery meets you, no deception there;
The spells and charms that blinded you before,
All vanish there, and fascinate no more.
I am no preacher; let this hint suffice—
The Cross once seen is death to every vice;
Else He that hung there suffered all his pain,
Bled, groaned, and agonized, and died in vain.



TRUTH.

ARGUMENT.

The pursuit of error leads to destruction—Grace leads the right way—Its direction despised—The self-sufficient Pharisee compared with the peacock—The pheasant compared with the Christian—Heaven abhors affected sanctity—The hermit and his penances—The self-torturing Brahmin—Pride the ruling principle of both—Picture of a sanctimonious Prude—Picture of a saint—Freedom of a Christian—Importance of motives, illustrated by the conduct of two servants—The traveller overtaken by a storm likened to the sinner dreading the vengeance of the Almighty—Dangerous state of those who are just in their own conceit—The last moments of the infidel—Content of the ignorant but believing cottager—The rich, the wise, and the great, neglect the means of winning heaven—Poverty the best soil for religion—What man really is, and what in his own esteem—Unbelief often terminates in suicide—Scripture the only cure of woe—Pride the passion most hostile to truth—Danger of slighting the mercy offered by the Gospel—Plea for the virtuous heathen—Commands given by God on Sinai—The judgment-day—Plea of the believer.

"Pensantur trutinâ."—Hor., lib. ii. Ep. 1.

Man on the dubious waves of error toss'd,
His ship half-founder'd and his compass lost,
Sees, far as human optics may command,
A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land;
Spreads all his canvas, every sinew plies,
Pants for it, aims at it, enters it, and dies.
Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,
His well-built systems, philosophic dreams,
Deceitful views of future bliss, farewell!
He reads his sentence at the flames of hell.
  Hard lot of man! to toil for the reward
Of virtue, and yet lose it!—Wherefore hard?
He that would win the race must guide his horse
Obedient to the customs of the course,
Else, though unequall'd to the goal he flies,
A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.
Grace leads the right way,—if you choose the wrong,
Take it, and perish, but restrain your tongue;
Charge not, with light sufficient and left free,
Your wilful suicide on God's decree.
  Oh, how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumber'd plan!
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile;

From ostentation as from weakness free,
It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscribed above the portal, from afar
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
Legible only by the light they give,
Stand the soul-quickening words—BELIEVE, AND LIVE.
Too many, shock'd at what should charm them most,
Despise the plain direction and are lost.
Heaven on such terms! they cry with proud disdain,
Incredible, impossible, and vain!—
Rebel because 'tis easy to obey,
And scorn for its own sake the gracious way.
These are the sober, in whose cooler brains
Some thought of immortality remains;
The rest, too busy or too gay to wait
On the sad theme, their everlasting state,
Sport for a day, and perish in a night;
The foam upon the waters not so light.
Who judged the Pharisee? What odious cause
Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws?
Had he seduced a virgin, wrong'd a friend,
Or stabb'd a man to serve some private end?
Was blasphemy his sin? Or did he stray
From the strict duties of the sacred day?
Sit long and late at the carousing board?
(Such were the sins with which he charged his Lord.)
No—the man's morals were exact. What then?
'Twas his ambition to be seen of men.
His virtues were his pride; and that one vice
Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price;
He wore them as fine trappings for a show,
A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.
The self-applauding bird, the peacock, see—
Mark what a sumptuous pharisee is he!
Meridian sunbeams tempt him to unfold
His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold:
He treads as if, some solemn music near,
His measured step were govern'd by his ear,
And seems to say—"Ye meaner fowl, give place;
I am all splendour, dignity, and grace!"
Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,
Though he, too, has a glory in his plumes.
He, Christian-like, retreats with modest mien
To the close copse or far-sequester'd green,
And shines without desiring to be seen.
The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,

Heaven turns from with abhorrence and disdain;
Not more affronted by avow'd neglect,
Than by the mere dissembler's feign'd respect.
What is all righteousness that men devise
What, but a sordid bargain for the skies?
But Christ as soon would abdicate His own,
As stoop from heaven to sell the proud a throne.
His dwelling a recess in some rude rock;
Book, beads, and maple dish, his meagre stock;
In shirt of hair and weeds of canvas dress'd,
Girt with a bell-rope that the Pope has bless'd;
Adust with stripes told out for every crime,
And sore tormented, long before his time;
His prayer preferred to saints that cannot aid;
His praise postponed, and never to be paid;
See the sage hermit, by mankind admired,
With all that bigotry adopts inspired,
Wearing out life in his religious whim,
Till his religious whimsy wears out him.
His works, his abstinence, his zeal allow'd,
You think him humble—God accounts him proud.
High in demand, though lowly in pretence,
Of all his conduct this the genuine sense—
" My penitential stripes, my streaming blood,
Have purchased heaven, and prove my title good."
Turn eastward now, and fancy shall apply
To your weak sight her telescopic eye.
The Brahmin kindles on his own bare head
The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade;
His voluntary pains, severe and long,
Would give a barbarous air to British song.
No grand inquisitor could worse invent
Than he contrives to suffer, well content.
Which is the saintlier worthy of the two?
Past all dispute, yon anchorite, say you.
Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name?
I say the Brahmin has the fairer claim.
If sufferings Scripture nowhere recommends,
Devised by self to answer selfish ends,
Give saintship, then all Europe must agree
Ten starveling hermits suffer less than he.
The truth is, (if the truth may suit your ear,
And prejudice have left a passage clear,)
Pride has attain'd its most luxuriant growth,
And poison'd every virtue in them both.
Pride may be pamper'd while the flesh grows lean;
Humility may clothe an English d[illegible]n:

That grace was Cowper's*—his, confess'd by all—
Though placed in golden Durham's second stall.
Not all the plenty of a bishop's board,
His palace, and his lacqueys, and "my Lord!"
More nourish pride, that condescending vice,
Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice;
It thrives in misery, and abundant grows,
In misery fools upon themselves impose.
But why before us Protestants produce
An Indian mystic or a French recluse?
Their sin is plain; but what have we to fear,
Reform'd and well-instructed? You shall hear.
Yon ancient prude,† whose wither'd features show
She might be young, some forty years ago,
Her elbows pinion'd close upon her hips,
Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,
Her eyebrows arch'd, her eyes both gone astray
To watch yon amorous couple in their play,
With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies
The rude inclemency of wintry skies,
And sails with lappet head and mincing airs
Duly at clink of bell to morning prayers.
To thrift and parsimony much inclined,
She yet allows herself that boy behind;
The shivering urchin, bending as he goes,
With slipshod heels, and dewdrop at his nose,
His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,
Which future pages yet are doom'd to share,
Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm,
And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.
She, half an angel in her own account,
Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,
Though not a grace appears on strictest search,
But that she fasts, and *item*, goes to church.
Conscious of age, she recollects her youth,
And tells, not always with an eye to truth,
Who spann'd her waist, and who, where'er he came,
Scrawl'd upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name,
Who stole her slipper, fill'd it with tokay,
And drank the little bumper every day.
Of temper as envenom'd as an asp,
Censorious, and her every word a wasp,
In faithful memory she records the crimes,

* Spencer Cowper, second cousin of the poet. He was Dean of Durham from 1746 to his death in 1774.

† This picture is taken from Hogarth's "Morning."

Or real, or fictitious, of the times
Laughs at the reputations she has torn,
And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.
Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,
Of malice fed while flesh is mortified:
Take, madam, the reward of all your prayers,
Where hermits and where Brahmins meet with theirs;
Your portion is with them; nay, never frown,
But, if you please, some fathoms lower down.
Artist, attend!—your brushes and your paint—
Produce them—take a chair—now draw a Saint.
Oh, sorrowful and sad! the streaming tears
Channel her cheeks—a Niobe appears!
Is this a saint? Throw tints and all away—
True piety is cheerful as the day,
Will weep, indeed, and heave a pitying groan
For other's woes, but smiles upon her own.
What purpose has the King of saints in view?
Why falls the Gospel like a gracious dew?
To call up plenty from the teeming earth,
Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth?
Is it that Adam's offspring may be saved
From servile fear, or be the more enslaved?
To loose the links that gall'd mankind before,
Or bind them faster on, and add still more?
The free-born Christian has no chains to prove,
Or, if a chain, the golden one of love:
No fear attends to quench his glowing fires,
What fear he feels his gratitude inspires.
Shall he, for such deliverance freely wrought,
Recompense ill? He trembles at the thought.
His master's interest and his own combined
Prompt every movement of his heart and mind:
Thought, word, and deed, his liberty evince,
His freedom is the freedom of a prince.
Man's obligations infinite, of course
His life should prove that he perceives their force;
His utmost he can render is but small,
The principle and motive all in all.
You have two servants,—Tom, an arch sly rogue,
From top to toe the Geta* now in vogue,
Genteel in figure, easy in address,
Moves without noise, and swift as an express,
Reports a message with a pleasing grace,

* Geta was a roguish servant in two of Terence's comedies. Molière's "Scapin" answers to him.

Expert in all the duties of his place;
Say, on what hinge does his obedience move?
Has he a world of gratitude and love?
No, not a spark,—'tis all mere sharper's play;
He likes your house, your housemaid, and your pay;
Reduce his wages, or get rid of her,
Tom quits you, with—"Your most obedient, sir."
The dinner served, Charles takes his usual stand,
Watches your eye, anticipates command,
Sighs, if perhaps your appetite should fail,
And if he but suspects a frown, turns pale;
Consults all day your interest and your ease,
Richly rewarded if he can but please,
And, proud to make his firm attachment known,
To save your life would nobly risk his own.
Now which stands highest in your serious thought?
Charles, without doubt, say you—and so he ought;
One act, that from a thankful heart proceeds,
Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.
Thus Heaven approves as honest and sincere
The work of generous love and filial fear;
But with averted eyes the omniscient Judge
Scorns the base hireling and the slavish drudge.
Where dwell these matchless saints? old Curio cries;
Even at your side, sir, and before your eyes:
The favour'd few—the enthusiasts you despise.
And pleased at heart because on holy ground
Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,
Reproach a people with his single fall,
And cast his filthy raiment at them all.
Attend,—an apt similitude shall show
Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.
See where it smokes along the sounding plain,
Blown all aslant, a driving, dashing rain,
Peal upon peal redoubling all around,
Shakes it again and faster to the ground;
Now, flashing wide, now glancing as in play,
Swift beyond thought the lightnings dart away.
Ere yet it came the traveller urged his steed,
And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed;
Now drench'd throughout, and hopeless of his case,
He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace.
Suppose, unlook'd for in a scene so rude,
Long hid by interposing hill or wood,
Some mansion neat and elegantly dress'd,
By some kind hospitable heart possess'd,
Offer him warmth, security, and rest;

Think, with what pleasure, safe, and at his ease,
He hears the tempest howling in the trees,
What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ,
While danger past is turn'd to present joy.
So fares it with the sinner, when he feels
A growing dread of vengeance at his heels:
His conscience, like a glassy lake before,
Lash'd into foaming waves, begins to roar;
The law grown clamorous, though silent long,
Arraigns him, charges him with every wrong,
Asserts the right of his offended Lord,
And death, or restitution, is the word:
The last impossible, he fears the first,
And, having well deserved, expects the worst.
Then welcome refuge and a peaceful home,
Oh for a shelter from the wrath to come!
Crush me, ye rocks! ye falling mountains, hide!
Or bury me in ocean's angry tide!—
The scrutiny of those all-seeing eyes
I dare not—And you need not, God replies;
The remedy you want I freely give;
The Book shall teach you—read, believe, and live!
'Tis done—the raging storm is heard no more,
Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore,
And Justice, guardian of the dread command,
Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand.
A soul redeem'd demands a life of praise;
Hence the complexion of his future days,
Hence a demeanour holy and unspeck'd,
And the world's hatred, as its sure effect.
  Some lead a life unblameable and just,
Their own dear virtue their unshaken trust:
They never sin—or if (as all offend)
Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,
The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,
A light gratuity atones for all.
For though the Pope has lost his interest here,
And pardons are not sold as once they were,
No Papist more desirous to compound,
Than some grave sinners upon English ground.
That plea refuted, other quirks they seek—
Mercy is infinite, and man is weak;
The future shall obliterate the past,
And Heaven no doubt shall be their home at last.
  Come, then—a still, small whisper in your ear—
He has no hope who never had a fear;
And he that never doubted of his state,

He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.
The path to bliss abounds with many a snare;
Learning is one, and wit, however rare.
The Frenchman, first in literary fame,
(Mention him, if you please. Voltaire? The same,)
With spirit, genius, eloquence supplied,
Lived long, wrote much, laugh'd heartily, and died;
The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
Bon-mots to gall the Christian and the Jew;
An infidel in health, but what when sick?
Oh—then a text would touch him to the quick;
View him at Paris in his last career,
Surrounding throngs the demigod revere;
Exalted on his pedestal of pride,
And fumed with frankincense on every side,
He begs their flattery with his latest breath,
And smother'd in 't at last, is praised to death.
Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store;
Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit;
Receives no praise, but, though her lot be such,
(Toilsome and indigent,) she renders much;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
And in that charter reads, with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.
O happy peasant! O unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;
He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,
She never heard of half-a-mile from home:
He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
She safe in the simplicity of hers.
Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound
In science, win one inch of heavenly ground:
And is it not a mortifying thought
The poor should gain it, and the rich should not?
No—the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget
One pleasure lost, lose heaven without regret;
Regret would rouse them, and give birth to prayer,
Prayer would add faith, and faith would fix them there.
Not that the Former of us all in this,
Or aught He does, is govern'd by caprice;

The supposition is replete with sin,
And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.
Not so—the silver trumpet's heavenly call
Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all;
Kings are invited, and would kings obey,
No slaves on earth more welcome were than they;
But royalty, nobility, and state,
Are such a dead preponderating weight,
That endless bliss, (how strange soe'er it seem,)
In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.
'Tis open, and ye cannot enter—why?
Because ye will not, Conyers* would reply—
And he says much that many may dispute
And cavil at with ease, but none refute.
Oh, bless'd effect of penury and want,
The seed sown there, how vigorous is the plant!
No soil like poverty for growth divine,
As leanest land supplies the richest wine.
Earth gives too little, giving only bread,
To nourish pride, or turn the weakest head:
To them the sounding jargon of the schools
Seems what it is—a cap and bells for fools:
The light they walk by, kindled from above,
Shews them the shortest way to life and love:
They, strangers to the controversial field,
Where deists, always foil'd, yet scorn to yield,
And never check'd by what impedes the wise,
Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.
  Envy, ye great, the dull unletter'd small:
Ye have much cause for envy—but not all.
We boast some rich ones whom the gospel sways,
And one† who wears a coronet and prays;
Like gleanings of an orange-tree, they show
Here and there one upon the topmost bough.
  How readily, upon the gospel plan,
That question has its answer,—What is man?
Sinful and weak, in every sense a wretch,
An instrument whose chords upon the stretch,
And strain'd to the last screw that he can bear,
Yield only discord in his Maker's ear;
Once the blest residence of truth divine,
Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine,
Where, in his own oracular abode,
Dwelt visibly the light-creating God;

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* Dr. R. Conyers, rector of S. Paul's, Deptford, a celebrated evangelical clergyman.
† William Earl of Dartmouth, Newton's patron.

But made long since, like Babylon of old,
A den of mischiefs never to be told:
And she, once mistress of the realms around,
Now scatter'd wide and nowhere to be found,
As soon shall rise and reascend the throne,
By native power and energy her own,
As Nature, at her own peculiar cost,
Restore to man the glories he has lost.
Go, bid the winter cease to chill the year,
Replace the wandering comet in his sphere,
Then boast, (but wait for that unhoped for hour)
The self-restoring arm of human power.
But what is man in his own proud esteem?
Hear him, himself the poet and the theme:
A monarch clothed with majesty and awe,
His mind his kingdom, and his will his law;
Grace in his mien, and glory in his eyes,
Supreme on earth, and worthy of the skies,
Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,
And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a god!
  So sings he, charm'd with his own mind and form,
The song magnificent—the theme a worm!
Himself so much the source of his delight,
His Maker has no beauty in his sight.
See where he sits, contemplative and fixed,
Pleasure and wonder in his features mix'd,
His passions tamed and all at his control,
How perfect the composure of his soul!
Complacency has breathed a gentle gale
O'er all his thoughts, and swell'd his easy sail.
His books well trimm'd and in the gayest style,
Like regimental coxcombs rank and file,
Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,
And teach him notions splendid as themselves:
The Bible only stands neglected there,
Though that of all most worthy of his care;
And, like an infant troublesome awake,
Is left to sleep for peace and quiet sake.
  What shall the man deserve of humankind,
Whose happy skill and industry combined
Shall prove (what argument could never yet)
The Bible an imposture and a cheat?
The praises of the libertine profess'd,
The worst of men, and curses of the best.
Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes,
The dying, trembling at the awful close,
Where the betray'd, forsaken, and oppress'd,

The thousands whom the world forbids to rest,
Where should they find, (those comforts at an end
The Scripture yields,) or hope to find a friend?
Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,
And, seeking exile from the sight of men,
Bury herself in solitude profound,
Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.
Thus often Unbelief, grown sick of life,
Flies to the tempting pool, or felon knife;
The jury meet, the coroner is short,
And lunacy the verdict of the court.
Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known,
Such lunacy is ignorance alone;
They knew not, what some bishops may not know,
That Scripture is the only cure of woe:
That field of promise, how it flings abroad
Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road!
The soul, reposing on assured relief,
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
Forgets her labour as she toils along,
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.
But the same word that, like the polish'd share
Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,
Kills too the flowery weeds, where'er they grow,
That bind the sinner's bacchanalian brow.
Oh, that unwelcome voice of heavenly love,
Sad messenger of mercy from above,
How does it grate upon his thankless ear,
Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear!
His will and judgment at continual strife,
That civil war embitters all his life;
In vain he points his powers against the skies,
In vain he closes or averts his eyes,
Truth will intrude—she bids him yet beware—
And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.
Though various foes against the Truth combine,
Pride above all opposes her design:
Pride, of a growth superior to the rest,
The subtlest serpent with the loftiest crest,
Swells at the thought, and, kindling into rage,
Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage.
And is the soul indeed so lost?—she cries,
Fallen from her glory, and too weak to rise?
Torpid and dull beneath a frozen zone,
Has she no spark that may be deem'd her own?
Grant her indebted to what zealots call,
Grace undeserved, yet surely not for all;

Some beams of rectitude she yet displays,
Some love of virtue, and some power to praise;
Can lift herself above corporeal things,
And, soaring on her own unborrow'd wings,
Possess herself of all that's good or true,
Assert the skies, and vindicate her due.
Past indiscretion is a venial crime;
And if the youth, unmellow'd yet by time,
Bore on his branch, luxuriant then and rude,
Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude,
Maturer years shall happier stores produce,
And meliorate the well-concocted juice.
Then, conscious of her meritorious zeal,
To Justice she may make a bold appeal,
And leave to Mercy, with a tranquil mind,
The worthless and unfruitful of mankind.
Hear, then, how Mercy, slighted and defied,
Retorts the affront against the crown of Pride.
  Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorr'd,
And the fool with it who insults his Lord.
The atonement a Redeemer's love has wrought
Is not for you—the righteous need it not.
Seest thou yon harlot, wooing all she meets,
The worn-out nuisance of the public streets,
Herself from morn to night, from night to morn,
Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn:
The gracious shower, unlimited and free,
Shall fall on her, when Heaven denies it thee,
Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift—
That man is dead in sin, and life a gift.
  Is virtue, then, unless of Christian growth,
Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both?
Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,
For ignorance of what they could not know?
That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue;
Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong!
Truly, not I—the partial light men have,
My creed persuades me, well employ'd, may save;
While he that scorns the noonday beam, perverse,
Shall find the blessing unimproved a curse.
Let heathen worthies, whose exalted min
Left sensuality and dross behind,
Possess for me their undisputed lot,
And take unenvied the reward they sought.
But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,
Not blind by choice, but destined not to see.
Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame,

Celestial, though they knew not whence it came,
Derived from the same source of light and grace,
That guides the Christian in his swifter race,
Their judge was conscience, and her rule their law:
That rule, pursued with reverence and with awe,
Led them, however faltering, faint, and slow,
From what they knew to what they wish'd to know.
But let not him that shares a brighter day,
Traduce the splendour of a noontide ray,
Prefer the twilight of a darker time,
And deem his base stupidity no crime;
The wretch, who slights the bounty of the skies,
And sinks while favour'd with the means to rise,
Shall find them rated at their full amount,
The good he scorn'd all carried to account.
Marshalling all His terrors as He came,
Thunder, and earthquake, and devouring flame,
From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law—
Life for obedience, death for every flaw.
When the great Sovereign would His will express,
He gives a perfect rule, what can He less?
And guards it with a sanction as severe
As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear:
Else His own glorious rights He would disclaim,
And man might safely trifle with His name.
He bids him glow with unremitting love
To all on earth, and to Himself above;
Condemns the injurious deed, the slanderous tongue,
The thought that meditates a brother's wrong:
Brings not alone the more conspicuous part,
His conduct, to the test, but tries his heart.
Hark! universal nature shook and groan'd,
'Twas the last trumpet—see the Judge enthroned!
Rouse all your courage at your utmost need,
Now summon every virtue, stand and plead.
What! silent? Is your boasting heard no more?
That self-renouncing wisdom, learn'd before,
Had shed immortal glories on your brow,
That all your virtues cannot purchase now.
All joy to the believer! He can speak,
Trembling yet happy, confident yet meek.
"Since the dear hour that brought me to Thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but Thine,
Nor hoped but in Thy righteousness divine:
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child;

Howe'er perform'd, it was their brightest part,
That they proceeded from a grateful heart;
Cleansed in Thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil, and accept their good:
I cast them at Thy feet—my only plea
Is what it was, dependance upon Thee:
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never fail'd, nor shall it fail me now."
  Angelic gratulations rend the skies,
Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,
Humility is crown'd, and Faith receives the prize.



TABLE TALK.

ARGUMENT.

False glory—Attributes of royalty in England—Quevedo's satire on kings—Kings objects of pity—Inquiry concerning the cause of Englishmen's scorn of arbitrary rule—Character of the English and the French—Freedom—Freedom sometimes needs the restraints of discipline—Reference to the Gordon riots in London—Lord Chatham—Political state of England—The vices that debase her portend her downfall—Political events the instruments of Providence—The poet disclaims prophetic inspiration—The choice of a subject—Reference to Homer, Virgil, and Milton—Progress of poetry—The poet laments that religion is not more frequently united with poetry.

"Si te fortè meæ gravis uret sarcina chartæ,
Abjicito." HOR. lib. i. Ep. 13.

A. You told me, I remember, glory, built
On selfish principles, is shame and guilt:
The deeds that men admire as half divine,
Stark-naught, because corrupt in their design.
Strange doctrine this! that without scruple tears
The laurel that the very lightning spares;*
Brings down the warrior's trophy to the dust,
And eats into his bloody sword like rust.
B. I grant that men, continuing what they are,
Fierce, avaricious, proud, there must be war;
And never meant the rule should be applied
To him that fights with justice on his side.
Let laurels drench'd in pure Parnassian dews
Reward his memory, dear to every muse,
Who, with a courage of unshaken root,
In honour's field advancing his firm foot,
Plants it upon the line that Justice draws,
And will prevail or perish in her cause.
'Tis to the virtues of such men, man owes
His portion in the good that Heaven bestows;
And when recording History displays
Feats of renown, though wrought in ancient days,

* There is an old superstition that lightning never strikes the laurel-tree. Perhaps it proceeded from the idea of the heathen that the tree was consecrated to Apollo.

Tells of a few stout hearts that fought and died
Where duty placed them, at their country's side,
The man that is not moved with what he reads,
That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,
Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,
Is base in kind, and born to be a slave.
But let eternal infamy pursue
The wretch, to nought but his ambition true,
Who, for the sake of filling with one blast
The post-horns of all Europe, lays her waste.
Think yourself station'd on a towering rock,
To see a people scatter'd like a flock,
Some royal mastiff panting at their heels,
With all the savage thirst a tiger feels;
Then view him self-proclaimed in a gazette
Chief monster that has plagued the nations yet!
The globe and sceptre in such hands misplaced,
Those ensigns of dominion, how disgraced!
The glass that bids man mark the fleeting hour,
And Death's own scythe, would better speak his power.
Then grace the bony phantom in their stead
With the king's shoulderknot and gay cockade;
Clothe the twin brethren in each other's dress,
The same their occupation and success.
A. 'Tis your belief the world was made for man;
Kings do but reason on the self-same plan:
Maintaining yours, you cannot theirs condemn,
Who think, or seem to think, man made for them.
B. Seldom, alas! the power of logic reigns
With much sufficiency in royal brains;
Such reasoning falls like an inverted cone,
Wanting its proper base to stand upon.
Man made for kings! those optics are but dim
That tell you so—say, rather, they for him.
That were indeed a king-ennobling thought,
Could they, or would they, reason as they ought.
The diadem, with mighty projects lined,
To catch renown by ruining mankind,
Is worth, with all its gold and glittering store,
Just what the toy will sell for, and no more.
Oh! bright occasions of dispensing good,
How seldom used, how little understood!
To pour in Virtue's lap her just reward;
Keep Vice restrain'd behind a double guard;
To quell the faction that affronts the throne
By silent magnanimity alone;
To nurse with tender care the thriving arts,

Watch every beam philosophy imparts,
To give Religion her unbridled scope,
Nor judge by statute a believer's hope;
With close fidelity and love unfeigned
To keep the matrimonial bond unstain'd;
Covetous only of a virtuous praise;
His life a lesson to the land he sways;
To touch the sword with conscientious awe,
Nor draw it but when duty bids him draw;
To sheath it in the peace-restoring close
With joy beyond what victory bestows—
Blest country! where these kingly glories shine;
Blest England! if this happiness be thine.
A. Guard what you say: the patriotic tribe
Will sneer, and charge you with a bribe.
B. A bribe?
The worth of his three kingdoms I defy,
To lure me to the baseness of a lie;
And, of all lies, (be that one poet's boast,)
The lie that flatters I abhor the most.
Those arts be theirs, that hate his gentle reign,
But he that loves him has no need to feign.
A. Your smooth eulogium, to one crown address'd,
Seems to imply a censure on the rest.
B. Quevedo,* as he tells his sober tale,
Ask'd when in hell to see the royal jail;
Approv'd their method in all other things,
"But where, good sir, do you confine your kings?"
"There," said his guide, "the group is in full view."
"Indeed!" replied the Don, "there are but few."
His black interpreter the charge disdain'd;—
"Few, fellow?—There are all that ever reign'd."
Wit, undistinguishing, is apt to strike
The guilty and not guilty, both alike.
I grant the sarcasm is too severe,
And we can readily refute it here,
While Alfred's name, the father of his age,
And the Sixth Edward's grace the historic page.
A. Kings then at last have but the lot of all:
By their own conduct they must stand or fall.
B. True. While they live, the courtly laureate pays
His quit-rent ode, his peppercorn of praise,
And many a dunce, whose fingers itch to write,
Adds as he can his tributary mite

* Quevedo de Villegas, a Spanish writer of the seventeenth century. He wrote "Visions of Hell."

A subject's faults a subject may proclaim,
A monarch's errors are forbidden game!
Thus, free from censure, overawed by fear,
And praised for virtues that they scorn to wear,
The fleeting forms of majesty engage
Respect, while stalking o'er life's narrow stage,
Then leave their crimes for history to scan,
And ask with busy scorn, Was this the man?
I pity kings whom worship waits upon
Obsequious from the cradle to the throne;
Before whose infant eyes the flatterer bows,
And binds a wreath about their baby brows;
Whom education stiffens into state,
And death awakens from that dream too late.
Oh! if servility with supple knees,
Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please;
If smooth dissimulation, skill'd to grace
A devil's purpose with an angel's face;
If smiling peeresses and simpering peers,
Encompassing his throne a few short years;
If the gilt carriage and the pamper'd steed,
That wants no driving and disdains the lead;
If guards mechanically form'd in ranks,
Playing at beat of drum their martial pranks,
Shouldering and standing, as if struck to stone,
While condescending majesty looks on;
If monarchy consists in such base things,
Sighing, I say again, I pity kings!
To be suspected, thwarted, and withstood,
Even when he labours for his country's good;
To see a band call'd patriot for no cause,
But that they catch at popular applause,
Careless of all the anxiety he feels,
Hook disappointment on the public wheels,
With all their flippant fluency of tongue,
Most confident, when palpably most wrong,—
If this be kingly, then farewell for me
All kingship, and may I be poor and free!
To be the Table Talk of clubs up-stairs,
To which the unwash'd artificer repairs,
To indulge his genius after long fatigue,
By diving into cabinet intrigue,
(For what kings deem a toil, as well they may,
To him is relaxation and mere play;)—
To win no praise when well-wrought plans prevail,
But to be rudely censured when they fail;
To doubt the love his favourites may pretend,

And in reality to find no friend;
If he indulge a cultivated taste,
His galleries with the works of art well graced,
To hear it call'd extravagance and waste;
If these attendants, and if such as these,
Must follow royalty, then welcome ease!
However humble and confined the sphere,
Happy the state that has not these to fear!
A. Thus men, whose thoughts contemplative have dwelt
On situations that they never felt,
Start up sagacious, cover'd with the dust
Of dreaming study and pedantic rust,
And prate and preach about what others prove,
As if the world and they were hand and glove.
Leave kingly backs to cope with kingly cares,
They have their weight to carry, subjects theirs;
Poets, of all men, ever least regret
Increasing taxes and the nation's debt.
Could you contrive the payment, and rehearse
The mighty plan, oracular, in verse,
No bard, howe'er majestic, old or new,
Should claim my fix'd attention more than you.
B. Not Brindley nor Bridgewater would essay*
To turn the course of Helicon that way:
Nor would the Nine consent the sacred tide
Should purl amidst the traffic of Cheapside,
Or tinkle in 'Change Alley, to amuse
The leathern ears of stock-jobbers and Jews.
A. Vouchsafe, at least, to pitch the key of rhyme
To themes more pertinent, if less sublime.
When ministers and ministerial arts—
Patriots, who love good places at their hearts—
When admirals, extoll'd for standing still,
Or doing nothing with a deal of skill—
Generals, who will not conquer when they may,
Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay—
When Freedom, wounded almost to despair,
Though discontent alone can find out where—
When themes like these employ the poet's tongue,
I hear—as mute as if a syren sung.
Or tell me, if you can, what power maintains
A Briton's scorn of arbitrary chains?
That were a theme might animate the dead,
And move the lips of poets cast in lead.

* James Brindley was the inventor of inland navigation by means of canals. The Duke of Bridgewater was his patron.

B. The cause, though worth the search, may yet elude
Conjecture and remark, however shrewd.
They take, perhaps, a well-directed aim,
Who seek it in his climate and his frame.
Liberal in all things else, yet Nature here
With stern severity, deals out the year.
Winter invades the spring, and often pours
A chilling flood on summer's drooping flowers;
Unwelcome vapours quench autumnal beams,
Ungenial blasts attending, curl the streams;
The peasants urge their harvest, ply the fork
With double toil, and shiver at their work.
Thus with a rigour, for his good design'd,
She rears her favourite man of all mankind.
His form robust and of elastic tone,
Proportion'd well, half muscle and half bone,
Supplies with warm activity and force
A mind well lodged, and masculine of course.
Hence Liberty, sweet Liberty inspires
And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.
Patient of constitutional control,
He bears it with meek manliness of soul;
But if authority grow wanton, woe
To him that treads upon his free-born toe!
One step beyond the boundary of the laws
Fires him at once in Freedom's glorious cause.
Thus proud Prerogative, not much revered,
Is seldom felt, though sometimes seen and heard;
And in his cage, like parrot fine and gay,
Is kept to strut, look big, and talk away.
Born in a climate softer far than ours,
Not form'd like us, with such Herculean powers,
The Frenchman, easy, debonair, and brisk,
Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,
Is always happy, reign whoever may,
And laughs the sense of misery far away.
He drinks his simple beverage with a gust,
And feasting on an onion and a crust,
We never feel the alacrity and joy
With which he shouts and carols, *Vive le Roi!*
Fill'd with as much true merriment and glee
As if he heard his king say—"Slave, be free!"
Thus happiness depends, as Nature shows,
Less on exterior things than most suppose.
Vigilant over all that He has made,
Kind Providence attends with gracious aid;
Bids equity throughout His works prevail,
And weighs the nations in an even scale;

He can encourage slavery to a smile,
And fill with discontent a British isle.
A. Freeman and slave then, if the case be such,
Stand on a level,—and you prove too much.
If all men indiscriminately share
His fostering power, and tutelary care,
As well be yoked by despotism's hand,
As dwell at large in Britain's charter'd land.
B. No. Freedom has a thousand charms to show,
That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.
The mind attains beneath her happy reign
The growth that Nature meant she should attain;
The varied field of science, ever new,
Opening and wider opening on her view,
She ventures onward with a prosperous force,
While no base fear impedes her in her course.
Religion, richest favour of the skies,
Stands most reveal'd before the freeman's eyes;
No shades of superstition blot the day,
Liberty chases all that gloom away.
The soul, emancipated, unoppress'd,
Free to prove all things, and hold fast the best,
Learns much, and to a thousand listening minds,
Communicates with joy the good she finds.
Courage in arms, and ever prompt to show
His manly forehead to the fiercest foe;
Glorious in war, but for the sake of peace,
His spirits rising as his toils increase,
Guards well what arts and industry have won,
And Freedom claims him for her firstborn son.
Slaves fight for what were better cast away,
The chain that binds them, and a tyrant's sway;
But they that fight for freedom, undertake
The noblest cause mankind can have at stake,
Religion, virtue, truth, whate'er we call
A blessing, freedom is the pledge of all.
O Liberty! the prisoner's pleasing dream,
The poet's muse, his passion, and his theme,
Genius is thine, and thou art Fancy's nurse,
Lost without thee the ennobling powers of verse;
Heroic song from thy free touch acquires
Its clearest tone, the rapture it inspires.
Place me where Winter breathes his keenest air,
And I will sing, if Liberty be there;
And I will sing at Liberty's dear feet,
In Afric's torrid clime, or India's fiercest heat.
A. Sing where you please; in such a cause I grant
An English poet's privilege to rant.

But is not Freedom, at least is not ours,
Too apt to play the wanton with her powers,
Grow freakish, and, o'erleaping every mound,
Spread anarchy and terror all around?
B. Agreed. But would you sell or slay your horse
For bounding and curveting in his course?
Or if, when ridden with a careless rein,
He break away, and seek the distant plain?
No. His high mettle, under good control,
Gives him Olympic speed, and shoots him to the goal.
Let discipline employ her wholesome arts;
Let magistrates alert perform their parts,*
Not skulk, or put on a prudential mask,
As if their duty were a desperate task;
Let active laws apply the needful curb,
To guard the peace that riot would disturb;
And Liberty, preserved from wild excess,
Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress.
When Tumult lately burst his prison door,
And set plebeian thousands in a roar;
When he usurp'd authority's just place,
And dared to look his master in the face,
When the rude rabble's watchword was—Destroy!
And blazing London seem'd a second Troy;
Liberty blush'd, and hung her drooping head,
Beheld their progress with the deepest dread,
Blush'd that effects like these she should produce,
Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.
She loses in such storms her very name,
And fierce licentiousness should bear the blame.
Incomparable gem! thy worth untold;
Cheap, though blood-bought, and thrown away when sold;
May no foes ravage thee, and no false friend
Betray thee, while professing to defend!
Prize it, ye ministers; ye monarchs, spare;
Ye patriots, guard it with a miser's care!
A. Patriots, alas! the few that have been found,
Where most they flourish, upon English ground,
The country's need have scantily supplied;
And the last left the scene when Chatham died.
B. Not so—the virtue still adorns our age,
Though the chief actor died upon the stage.†

* Cowper is hinting here at the timid and dilatory conduct of the magistrates during the Lord George Gordon Riots in 1780, to which the following passage refers.
† Lord Chatham, who was struck down in a fit while addressing the House of Lords. It was his death-stroke.

In him, Demosthenes was heard again;
Liberty taught him her Athenian strain;
She clothed him with authority and awe,
Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
His speech, his form, his action, full of grace,
And all his country beaming in his face,
He stood, as some inimitable hand
Would strive to make a Paul or Tully stand.
No sycophant or slave that dared oppose
Her sacred cause, but trembled when he rose,
And every venal stickler for the yoke
Felt himself crush'd at the first word he spoke.
Such men are raised to station and command.
When Providence means mercy to a land,
He speaks, and they appear; to Him they owe
Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow,
To manage with address, to seize with power
The crisis of a dark decisive hour.
So Gideon earn'd a victory not his own,
Subserviency his praise, and that alone.
Poor England! thou art a devoted deer,
Beset with every ill but that of fear.
The nations hunt: all mark thee for a prey;
They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay:
Undaunted still, though wearied and perplex'd,
Once Chatham saved thee; but who saves thee next?
Alas! the tide of pleasure sweeps along
All that should be the boast of British song.
'Tis not the wreath that once adorn'd thy brow,
The prize of happier times, will serve thee now.
Our ancestry, a gallant Christian race,
Patterns of every virtue, every grace,
Confess'd a God: they kneel'd before they fought,
And praised Him in the victories He wrought.
Now from the dust of ancient days bring forth
Their sober zeal, integrity, and worth;
Courage, ungraced by these, affronts the skies,
Is but the fire without the sacrifice.
The stream that feeds the well-spring of the heart
Not more invigorates life's noblest part,
Than virtue quickens with a warmth divine
The powers that sin has brought to a decline.
A. The inestimable estimate of Brown*
Rose like a paper kite, and charmed the town:

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* Dr. John Brown published in 1757 his "Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times." It was a very popular work at the time; seven editions of it were published. The book has long been forgotten.

But measures, plann'd and executed well,
Shifted the wind that raised it, and it fell.
He trod the very self-same ground you tread,
And victory refuted all he said.
B. And yet his judgment was not framed amiss;
Its error, if it err'd, was merely this—
He thought the dying hour already come,
And a complete recovery* struck him dumb.
But that effeminacy, folly, lust,
Enervate and enfeeble, and needs must,
And that a nation shamefully debased
Will be despised and trampled on at last,
Unless sweet penitence her powers renew,
Is truth, if history itself be true.
There is a time, and justice marks the date,
For long-forbearing clemency to wait;
That hour elapsed, the incurable revolt
Is punish'd, and down comes the thunderbolt.
If Mercy *then* put by the threatening blow,
Must she perform the same kind office now?
May she! and if offended Heaven be still
Accessible, and prayer prevail, she will.
'Tis not, however, insolence and noise,
The tempest of tumultuary joys,
Nor is it yet despondence and dismay
Will win her visits, or engage her stay;
Prayer only, and the penitential tear,
Can call her smiling down, and fix her here.
But when a country (one that I could name)
In prostitution sinks the sense of shame;
When infamous venality, grown bold,
Writes on his bosom, *To be let or sold;*
When perjury, that heaven-defying vice,
Sells oaths by tale, and at the lowest price,
Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made,
To turn a penny in the way of trade;
When avarice starves (and never hides his face)
Two or three millions of the human race,
And not a tongue inquires how, where, or when,
Though conscience will have twinges now and th
When profanation of the sacred cause
In all its parts, times, ministry, and laws,
Bespeaks a land, once Christian, fallen and lost
In all that wars against that title most;

* The revival of public spirit in 1757, and a succession of glorious victories.

What follows next, let cities of great name,
And regions long since desolate proolaim:
Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome,
Speak to the present times, and times to come;
They cry aloud in every careless ear,
"Stop, while ye may, suspend your mad career!
Oh, learn from our example and our fate—
Learn wisdom and repentance ere too late!"
Not only vice disposes and prepares
The mind that slumbers sweetly in her snares,
To stoop to tyranny's usurp'd command,
And bend her polish'd neck beneath his hand,
(A dire effect, by one of Nature's laws
Unchangeably connected with its cause,)
But Providence himself will intervene
To throw His dark displeasure o'er the scene.
All are His instruments; each form of war,
What burns at home, or threatens from afar,
Nature in arms, her elements at strife,
The storms that overset the joys of life,
Are but His rods to scourge a guilty land,
And waste it at the bidding of His hand.
He gives the word, and mutiny soon roars
In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores;
The standards of all nations are unfurl'd;
She has one foe, and that one foe—the world.
And if He doom that people with a frown,
And mark them with a seal of wrath, press'd down,
Obduracy takes place; callous and tough,
The reprobated race grows judgment-proof:
Earth shakes beneath them, and heaven roars above;
But nothing scares them from the course they love.
To the lascivious pipe and wanton song,
That charm down fear, they frolic it along,
With mad rapidity and unconcern,
Down to the gulf from which is no return.
They trust in navies, and their navies fail—
God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail!
They trust in armies, and their courage dies;
In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies;
But all they trust in withers, as it must,
When He commands in whom they place no trust.
Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast,
A long-despised, but now victorious host;
Tyranny sends the chain that must abridge
The noble sweep of all their privilege,
Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock,
Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.

A. Such lofty strains embellish what you teach,
Mean you to prophesy, or but to preach?
B. I know the mind that feels indeed the fire
The Muse imparts, and can command the lyre,
Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,
Whate'er the theme, that others never feel.
If human woes her soft attention claim,
A tender sympathy pervades the frame,
She pours a sensibility divine
Along the nerve of every feeling line.
But if a deed not tamely to be borne,
Fire indignation and a sense of scorn,
The strings are swept with such a power, so loud,
The storm of music shakes th' astonish'd crowd.
So, when remote futurity is brought
Before the keen inquiry of her thought,
A terrible sagacity informs
The poet's heart; he looks to distant storms,
He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers,
And, armed with strength surpassing human powers,
Seizes events as yet unknown to man,
And darts his soul into the dawning plan.
Hence, in a Roman mouth, the graceful name
Of prophet and of poet* was the same;
Hence British poets too the priesthood shared,
And every hallow'd Druid was a bard.
But no prophetic fires to me belong;
I play with syllables, and sport in song.
A. At Westminster, where little poets strive
To set a distich upon six and five,
Where Discipline helps opening buds of sense
And makes his pupils proud with silver pence,†
I was a poet too; but modern taste
Is so refined, and delicate, and chaste,
That verse, whatever fire the fancy warms,
Without a creamy smoothness has no charms,
Thus, all success depending on an ear,
And thinking I might purchase it too dear,
If sentiment were sacrificed to sound,
And truth cut short to make a period round,
I judged a man of sense could scarce do worse
Than caper in the morris-dance of verse.
B. Thus reputation is a spur to wit,

* Vates.

† "I was a schoolboy," says Cowper, "in high favour with the master, received a silver groat for my exercise, and had the pleasure of seeing it sent from form to form for the admiration of all who were able to understand it."

And some wits flag through fear of losing it.
Give me the line that ploughs its stately course,
Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force;
That like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,
Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.
When labour and when dulness, club in hand,
Like the two figures at St. Dunstan's stand,*
Beating alternately, in measured time,
The clockwork tintinnabulum of rhyme,
Exact and regular the sounds will be;
But such mere quarter-strokes are not for me.
  From him who rears a poem lank and long,
To him who strains his all into a song,
Perhaps some bonny Caledonian air,
All birks and braes, though he was never there;
Or, having whelp'd a prologue with great pains,
Feels himself spent, and fumbles for his brains;
A prologue interdash'd with many a stroke,
An art contrived to advertise a joke,
So that the jest is clearly to be seen,
Not in the words—but in the gap between;
Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ,
The substitute for genius, sense, and wit.
  To dally much with subjects mean and low,
Proves that the mind is weak, or makes it so.
Neglected talents rust into decay,
And every effort ends in push-pin play.
The man that means success, should soar above
A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove;
Else, summoning the muse to such a theme,
The fruit of all her labour is whipt-cream.
As if an eagle flew aloft, and then—
Stoop'd from its highest pitch to pounce a wren.
As if the poet, purposing to wed,
Should carve himself a wife in gingerbread.
  Ages elapsed ere Homer's lamp appear'd,
And ages ere the Mantuan swan was heard;
To carry nature lengths unknown before,
To give a Milton birth, ask'd ages more.
Thus genius rose and set at order'd times,
And shot a day-spring into distant climes,
Ennobling every region that he chose;
He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose;
And, tedious years of Gothic darkness past,
Emerged all splendour in our isle at last.

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* Two figures which struck the quarters on St. Dunstan's church clock. They have long since been removed.

Thus lovely halcyons dive into the main,
Then shew far off their shining plumes again.
A. Is genius only found in epic lays?
Prove this, and forfeit all pretence to praise.
Make their heroic powers your own at once,
Or candidly confess yourself a dunce.
B. These were the chief; each interval of night
Was graced with many an undulating light;
In less illustrious bards his beauty shone
A meteor, or a star; in these, the sun.
The nightingale may claim the topmost bough
While the poor grasshopper must chirp below.
Like him unnoticed, I, and such as I,
Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly;
Perch'd on the meagre produce of the land,
An ell or two of prospect we command,
But never peep beyond the thorny bound,
Or oaken fence, that hems the paddock round.
In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart
Had faded, poetry was not an art;
Language, above all teaching, or if taught,
Only by gratitude and glowing thought,
Elegant as simplicity, and warm
As ecstasy, unmanacled by form,
Not prompted, as in our degenerate days,
By low ambition and the thirst of praise,
Was natural as is the flowing stream,
And yet magnificent—a God the theme!
That theme on earth exhausted, though above
'Tis found as everlasting as His love,
Man lavish'd all his thoughts on human things,
The feats of heroes and the wrath of kings;
But still, while virtue kindled his delight,
The song was moral, and so far was right.
'Twas thus till luxury seduced the mind
To joys less innocent, as less refined;
Then Genius danced a bacchanal; he crown'd
The brimming goblet, seized the thyrsus, bound
His brows with ivy, rushed into the field
Of wild imagination, and there reel'd,
The victim of his own lascivious fires,
And, dizzy with delight, profaned the sacred wires.
Anacreon, Horace, play'd in Greece and Rome
This bedlam part; and others nearer home.
When Cromwell fought for power, and while he reigned
The proud protector of the power he gain'd,
Religion, harsh, intolerant, austere,
Parent of manners like herself severe,

Drew a rough copy of the Christian face,
Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace;
The dark and sullen humour of the time
Judged every effort of the Muse a crime;
Verse, in the finest mould of fancy cast,
Was lumber in an age so void of taste;
But when the second Charles assumed the sway,
And arts revived beneath a softer day,
Then, like a bow long forced into a curve,
The mind, released from too constrain'd a nerve,
Flew to its first position with a spring
That made the vaulted roofs of pleasure ring.
His court, the dissolute and hateful school
Of wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,
Swarm'd with a scribbling herd, as deep inlaid
With brutal lust as ever Circe made.
From these a long succession in the rage
Of rank obscenity debauch'd their age,
Nor ceased till, ever anxious to redress
The abuses of her sacred charge, the press,
The Muse instructed a well-nurtur'd train
Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,
And claim the palm for purity of song,
That lewdness had usurp'd and worn so long.
Then decent pleasantry and sterling sense,
That neither gave nor would endure offence,
Whipp'd out of sight, with satire just and keen,
The puppy pack that had defiled the scene.
In front of these came Addison. In him
Humour in holiday and sightly trim,
Sublimity and attic taste combined,
To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.
Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,
In verse well disciplined, complete, compact,
Gave virtue and morality a grace
That, quite eclipsing pleasure's painted face,
Levied a tax of wonder and applause,
Even on the fools that trampled on their laws.
But he (his musical finesse was such,
So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)
Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
And every warbler had his tune by heart.
Nature imparting her satiric gift,
Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,
With droll sobriety they raise a smile
At folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while.
That constellation set, the world in vain
Must hope to look upon their like again.

A. Are we then left—*B.* Not wholly in the dark;
Wit now and then, struck smartly, shews a spark,
Sufficient to redeem the modern race
From total night and absolute disgrace.
While servile trick and imitative knack
Confine the million in the beaten track,
Perhaps some courser, who disdains the road,
Snuffs up the wind, and flings himself abroad.
Contemporaries all surpass'd, see one,
Short his career indeed, but ably run.
Churchill, himself unconscious of his powers,
In penury consumed his idle hours,
And, like a scatter'd seed at random sown,
Was left to spring by vigour of his own.
Lifted at length, by dignity of thought
And dint of genius, to an affluent lot,
He laid his head in luxury's soft lap,
And took too often there his easy nap.
If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,
'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.
Surly and slovenly, and bold and coarse,
Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force,
Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,
Always at speed, and never drawing bit,
He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,
And so disdain'd the rules he understood,
The laurel seem'd to wait on his command,
He snatch'd it rudely from the Muse's hand.
Nature, exerting an unwearied power,
Forms, opens, and gives scent to every flower;
Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads
The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads;
She fills profuse ten thousand little throats
With music, modulating all their notes,
And charms the woodland scenes and wilds unknown,
With artless airs and concerts of her own:
But seldom (as if fearful of expense)
Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence—
Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,
Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought;
Fancy, that from the bow that spans the sky
Brings colours, dipp'd in heaven, that never die;
A soul exalted above earth; a mind
Skill'd in the characters that form mankind;
And, as the sun, in rising beauty dress'd,
Looks to the westward from the dappled east,
And marks, whatever clouds may interpose
Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close,

An eye like his to catch the distant goal,
Or, ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,
Like his to shed illuminating rays
On every scene and subject it surveys,
Thus graced, the man asserts a poet's name,
And the world cheerfully admits the claim.
Pity Religion has so seldom found
A skilful guide into poetic ground!
The flowers would spring where'er she deign'd to stray,
And every Muse attend her in her way.
Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,
And many a compliment politely penn'd;
But, unattired in that becoming vest
Religion weaves for her, and half undress'd,
Stands in the desert, shivering and forlorn,
A wintry figure, like a wither'd thorn.
The shelves are full, all other themes are sped,
Hackney'd and worn to the last flimsy thread;
Satire has long since done his best, and curst
And loathsome ribaldry has done his worst;
Fancy has sported all her powers away
In tales, in trifles, and in children's play;
And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,
Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.
'Twere new indeed, to see a bard all fire,
Touch'd with a coal from Heaven, assume the lyre,
And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,
With more than mortal music on his tongue,
That He, who died below, and reigns above,
Inspires the song, and that His name is Love.
For, after all, if merely to beguile,
By flowing numbers and a flowery style,
The tedium that the lazy rich endure,
Which now and then sweet poetry may cure;
Or, if to see the name of idol self,
Stamp'd on the well-bound quarto, grace the shelf,
To float a bubble on the breath of fame,
Prompt his endeavour, and engage his aim,
Debased to servile purposes of pride,
How are the powers of genius misapplied!
The gift whose office is the Giver's praise,
To trace Him in His word, His works, His ways,
Then spread the rich discovery, and invite
Mankind to share in the divine delight;
Distorted from its use and just design,
To make the pitiful possessor shine,
To purchase at the fool-frequented fair
Of vanity, a wreath for self to wear,

Is profanation of the basest kind—
Proof of a trifling and a worthless mind.
A. Hail, Sternhold then, and Hopkins, hail!*
B. Amen.
If flattery, folly, lust, employ the pen;
If acrimony, slander, and abuse,
Give it a charge to blacken and traduce;
Though Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's ease,
With all that fancy can invent to please,
Adorn the polish'd periods as they fall,
One madrigal of theirs is worth them all.
A. 'Twould thin the ranks of the poetic tribe,
To dash the pen through all that you proscribe.
B. No matter—we could shift when they were not;
And should, no doubt, if they were all forgot

* Authors of the old version of the Psalms.



EXPOSTULATION.

ARGUMENT.

Expostulation with the Muse—England's apparently prosperous condition—State of Israel when the prophet wept over it—The Babylonian captivity—When nations decline, the evil commences in the Church—State of the Jews in the time of our Saviour—Evidences of their having been the most favoured of nations—Causes of their downfall—Lesson taught by it—Warning to Britain—The hand of Providence to be traced in adverse events—England's transgressions—Her vain-glory—Her conduct towards India—Abuse of the sacrament—Obduracy—Character of the Clergy—The poet adverts to the state of the ancient Britons—Beneficial influence of the Roman power—England under papal supremacy—Favours bestowed on her by Providence—Reasons for gratitude to God and for seeking to secure His favour—With that she may defy a world in arms- The poet anticipates little effect from his warning.

"Tantane, tam patiens, nullo certamine tolli
Dona sines?" VIRG.

WHY weeps the Muse for England? What appears
In England's case to move the Muse to tears?
From side to side of her delightful isle
Is she not clothed with a perpetual smile?
Can Nature add a charm, or Art confer,
A new found luxury not seen in her?
Where under heaven is pleasure more pursued,
Or where does cold reflection less intrude?
Her fields a rich expanse of wavy corn
Pour'd out from Plenty's overflowing horn;
Ambrosial gardens, in which art supplies
The fervour and the force of Indian skies;
Her peaceful shores, where busy Commerce waits
To pour his golden tide through all her gates;
Whom fiery suns that scorch the russet spice
Of eastern groves, and oceans floor'd with ice,
Forbid in vain to push his daring way
To darker climes, or climes of brighter day
Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll,
From the world's girdle to the frozen pole;
The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets;
Her vaults below, where every vintage meets;

Her theatres, her revels, and her sports,
The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,
But age, in spite of weakness and of pain,
Still haunts in hope to dream of youth again;
All speak her happy :—let the Muse look round
From east to west no sorrow can be found;
Or only what in cottages confined,
Sighs unregarded to the passing wind.
Then wherefore weep for England? What appears
In England's case to move the Muse to tears?
The prophet wept for Israel, wish'd his eyes
Were fountains fed with infinite supplies;
For Israel dealt in robbery and wrong;
There were the scorner's and the slanderer's tongue;
Oaths, used as playthings or convenient tools,
As interest biass'd knaves, or fashion fools;
Adultery, neighing at his neighbour's door;
Oppression, labouring hard to grind the poor;
The partial balance and deceitful weight;
The treacherous smile, a mask for secret hate;
Hypocrisy, formality in prayer,
And the dull service of the lip were there.
Her women, insolent and self-caress'd,
By Vanity's unwearied finger dress'd,
Forgot the blush that virgin fears impart
To modest cheeks, and borrow'd one from art;
Were just such trifles, without worth or use,
As silly pride and idleness produce;
Curl'd, scented, furbelow'd, and flounced around,
With feet too delicate to touch the ground,
They stretch'd the neck, and roll'd the wanton eye,
And sigh'd for every fool that flutter'd by.
He saw his people slaves to every lust,
Lewd, avaricious, arrogant, unjust;
He heard the wheels of an avenging God
Groan heavily along the distant road;
Saw Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass*
To let the military deluge pass;
Jerusalem a prey, her glory soil'd,
Her princes captive, and her treasure spoil'd:
Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry,
Stamp'd with his foot, and smote upon his thigh;
But wept, and stamp'd, and smote his thigh in vain,
Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain,
And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit
Ears long accustom'd to the pleasing lute:

* Her gates.

They scorn'd his inspiration and his theme,
Pronounc'd him frantic, and his fears a dream;
With self-indulgence wing'd the fleeting hours,
Till the foe found them, and down fell the towers.
Long time Assyria bound them in her chain,
Till penitence had purg'd the public stain,
And Cyrus, with relenting pity moved,
Return'd them happy to the land they loved;
There, proof against prosperity, awhile
They stood the test of her ensnaring smile,
And had the grace in scenes of peace to show
The virtue they had learned in scenes of woe.
But man is frail, and can but ill sustain
A long immunity from grief and pain;
And, after all the joys that Plenty leads,
With tiptoe step Vice silently succeeds.
When He that ruled them with a shepherd's rod,
In form a man, in dignity a God,
Came, not expected in that humble guise,
To sift and search them with unerring eyes,
He found, conceal'd beneath a fair outside,
The filth of rottenness and worm of pride,
Their piety a system of deceit,
Scripture employ'd to sanctify the cheat,
The Pharisee the dupe of his own art,
Self-idolized, and yet a knave at heart.
When nations are to perish in their sins,
'Tis in the church the leprosy begins:
The priest, whose office is with zeal sincere,
To watch the fountain, and preserve it clear,
Carelessly nods, and sleeps upon the brink,
While others poison what the flock must drink;
Or waking at the call of lust alone,
Infuses lies and errors of his own:
His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure;
And tainted by the very means of cure,
Catch from each other a contagious spot,
The foul forerunner of a general rot.
Then Truth is hush'd, that heresy may preach;
And all is trash that Reason cannot reach;
Then God's own image on the soul impress'd
Becomes a mockery and a standing jest:
And faith, the root whence only can arise
The graces of a life that wins the skies,
Loses at once all value and esteem,
Pronounced by greybeards a pernicious dream;
Then ceremony leads her bigots forth,
Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth,

While truths on which eternal things depend,
Find not, or hardly find a single friend:
As soldiers watch the signal of command,
They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand;
Happy to fill religion's vacant place
With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace.
  Such, when the Teacher of His Church was there,
People and priest, the sons of Israel were,
Stiff in the letter, lax in the design
And import of their oracles divine,
Their learning legendary, false, absurd,
And yet exalted above God's own Word,
They drew a curse from an intended good,
Puff'd up with gifts they never understood.
He judged them with as terrible a frown,
As if not love, but wrath had brought Him down:
Yet He was gentle as soft summer airs,
Had grace for others' sins, but none for theirs;
Through all He spoke a noble plainness ran—
Rhetoric is artifice, the work of man;
And tricks and turns that fancy may devise,
Are far too mean for Him that rules the skies.
The astonish'd vulgar trembled while He tore
The mask from faces never seen before;
He stripp'd the impostors in the noontide sun,
Show'd that they follow'd all they seem'd to shun;
Their prayers made public, their excesses kept
As private as the chambers where they slept;
The temple and its holy rites profaned
By mummeries He that dwelt in it disdain'd;
Uplifted hands, that, at convenient times,
Could act extortion and the worst of crimes,
Wash'd with a neatness scrupulously nice,
And free from every taint but that of vice.
Judgment, however tardy, mends her pace
When obstinacy once has conquer'd grace.
They saw distemper heal'd, and life restored,
In answer to the fiat of His word,
Confess'd the wonder, and with daring tongue
Blasphemed the authority from which it sprung.
They knew, by sure prognostics seen on high,
The future tone and temper of the sky;
But, grave dissemblers, could not understand
That sin let loose speaks punishment at hand.
  Ask now of history's authentic page,
And call up evidence from every age;
Display with busy and laborious hand
The blessings of the most indebted land;

What nation will you find whose annals prove
So rich an interest in Almighty love?
Where dwell they now, where dwelt in ancient day,
A people planted, water'd, blest as they?
Let Egypt's plagues and Canaan's woes proclaim
The favours pour'd upon the Jewish name;
Their freedom purchased for them at the cost
Of all their hard oppressors valued most;
Their title to a country not their own
Made sure by prodigies till then unknown;
For them the states they left made waste and void,
For them the states to which they went destroy'd;
A cloud to measure out their march by day,
By night a fire to cheer the gloomy way,
That moving signal summoning, when best
Their host to move, and when it stay'd, to rest;
For them the rocks dissolved into a flood,
The dews condensed into angelic food,
Their very garments sacred, old yet new,
And Time forbid to touch them as he flew,
Streams, swell'd above the bank, enjoin'd to stand,
While they pass'd through to their appointed land;
Their leader arm'd with meekness, zeal, and love,
And graced with clear credentials from above;
Themselves secured beneath the Almighty wing;
Their God their captain,* lawgiver, and king;
Crown'd with a thousand victories, and at last
Lords of the conquer'd soil, there rooted fast,
In peace possessing what they won by war,
Their name far publish'd, and revered as far;
Where will you find a race like theirs, endow'd
With all that man e'er wished, or heaven bestow'd?
  They, and they only, amongst all mankind,
Received the transcript of the Eternal Mind,
Were trusted with His own engraven laws,
And constituted guardians of His cause;
Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call,
And theirs by birth the Saviour of us all.
In vain the nations, that had seen them rise
With fierce and envious, yet admiring eyes,
Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were,
By power divine and skill that could not err.
Had they maintain'd allegiance firm and sure,
And kept the faith immaculate and pure,
Then the proud eagles of all-conquering Rome
Had found one city not to be o'ercome,

* Joshua v. 14.

And the twelve standards of the tribes unfurl'd
Had bid defiance to the warring world.
But grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds,
As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds;
Cured of the golden calves, their fathers' sin,
They set up self, that idol god within;
View'd a Deliverer with disdain and hate,
Who left them still a tributary state;
Seized fast His hand, held out to set them free
From a worse yoke, and nail'd it to the tree.
There was the consummation and the crown,
The flower of Israel's infamy full blown;
Thence date their sad declension, and their fall,
Their woes, not yet repeal'd; thence date them all.
Thus fell the best instructed in her day,
And the most favour'd land, look where we may.
Philosophy indeed on Grecian eyes
Had pour'd the day, and cleared the Roman skies;
In other climes perhaps creative art,
With power surpassing theirs, perform'd her part;
Might give more life to marble, or might fill
The glowing tablets with a juster skill;
Might shine in fable, and grace idle themes,
With all the embroidery of poetic dreams:
'Twas theirs alone to dive into the plan
That truth and mercy had reveal'd to man;
And while the world beside, that plan unknown,
Deified useless wood or senseless stone,
They breathed in faith their well-directed prayers,
And the true God, the God of truth, was theirs.
Their glory faded, and their race dispersed,
The last of nations now, though once the first,
"They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn,
Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn:
If we escaped not, if Heaven spared not us,
Peel'd, scatter'd, and exterminated thus;
If Vice received her retribution due,
When we were visited, what hope for you?"
When God arises with an awful frown,
To punish lust, or pluck presumption down;
When gifts perverted, or not duly prized,
Pleasure o'ervalued, and His grace despised;
Provoke the vengeance of His righteous hand
To pour down wrath upon a thankless land;
He will be found impartially severe,
Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear.
O Israel, of all nations most undone!
Thy diadem displaced, thy sceptre gone,

Thy temple, once thy glory, fall'n and razed,
And thou a worshipper e'en where thou may'st;
Thy services, once holy without spot,
Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot;
Thy Levites, once a consecrated host,
No longer Levites, and their lineage lost,
And thou thyself o'er every country sown,
With none on earth that thou canst call thine own;
Cry aloud, thou that sittest in the dust,
Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust,
Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears,
Say wrath is coming, and the storm appears;
But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.

What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar,
And fling their foam against thy chalky shore?
Mistress, at least while Providence shall please,
And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas,—
Why, having kept good faith, and often shown
Friendship and truth to others, find'st thou none?
Thou that hast set the persecuted free,
None interposes now to succour thee.
Countries indebted to thy power, that shine
With light derived from thee, would smother thine;
Thy very children watch for thy disgrace,
A lawless brood, and curse thee to thy face;
Thy rulers load thy credit, year by year,
With sums Peruvian mines could never clear,
As if, like arches built with skilful hand,
The more 'twere press'd the firmer it would stand.
The cry in all thy ships is still the same,
Speed us away to battle and to fame!
Thy mariners explore the wild expanse,
Impatient to descry the flags of France:
But, though they fight, as thine have ever fought,
Return ashamed without the wreaths they sought.
Thy senate is a scene of civil jar,
Chaos of contrarieties at war,
Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light,
Discordant atoms meet, ferment, and fight;
Where Obstinacy takes his sturdy stand,
To disconcert what Policy has plann'd;
Where Policy is busied all night long
In setting right what Faction has set wrong;
Where flails of oratory thresh the floor,
That yields them chaff and dust, and nothing more.
Thy rack'd inhabitants repine, complain,
Tax'd till the brow of Labour sweats in vain;
War lays a burden on the reeling state,

And peace does nothing to relieve the weight;
Successive loads succeeding broils impose,
And sighing millions prophesy the close.
  Is adverse Providence, when ponder'd well,
So dimly writ or difficult to spell,
Thou canst not read with readiness and ease
Providence adverse in events like these?
Know then, that heavenly wisdom on this ball
Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all;
That, while laborious and quick-thoughted man
Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,
He first conceives, then perfects his design,
As a mere instrument in hands divine:
Blind to the working of that secret power
That balances the wings of every hour,
The busy trifler dreams himself alone,
Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.
States thrive or wither as moons wax and wane,
Even as His will and His decrees ordain;
While honour, virtue, piety, bear sway,
They flourish; and, as these decline, decay.
In just resentment of His injured laws,
He pours contempt on them and on their cause;
Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart
The web of every scheme they have at heart;
Bids rottenness invade and bring to dust
The pillars of support in which they trust,
And do His errand of disgrace and shame
On the chief strength and glory of the frame.
None ever yet impeded what He wrought,
None bars Him out from his most secret thought;
Darkness itself before His eye is light,
And Hell's close mischief naked in His sight.
  Stand now and judge thyself.—Hast thou incurr'd
His anger who can waste thee with a word,
Who poises and proportions sea and land,
Weighing them in the hollow of His hand,
And in whose awful sight all nations seem
As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream?
Hast thou (a sacrilege His soul abhors)
Claim'd all the glory of thy prosperous wars,
Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem
Of His just praise to lavish it on them?
Hast thou not learn'd, what thou art often told,
A truth still sacred, and believed of old,
That no success attends on spears and swords
Unbless'd, and that the battle is the Lord's?
That Courage in his creature; and Dismay

The post, that at His bidding speeds away,
Ghastly in feature, and his stammering tongue
With doleful rumour and sad presage hung,
To quell the valour of the stoutest heart,
And teach the combatants a woman's part?
That He bids thousands fly when none pursue,
Saves as He will, by many or by few,
And claims for ever, as His royal right,
The event and sure decision of the fight?
Hast thou, though suckled at fair Freedom's breast,
Exported slavery to the conquer'd East?
Pull'd down the tyrants India served with dread,
And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead?
Gone thither arm'd and hungry, return'd full,
Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
A despot big with power obtain'd by wealth,
And that obtain'd by rapine and by stealth?
With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,
And left their virtues and thine own behind,
And, having truck'd thy soul, brought home the fee,
To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?
Hast thou by statute shoved from its design*
The Saviour's feast, His own blest bread and wine,
And made the symbols of atoning grace
An office-key, a picklock to a place,
That infidels may prove their title good
By an oath dipp'd in sacramental blood?
A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
Of all that grave apologists may write,
And though a bishop† toil to cleanse the stain,
He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.
And hast thou sworn on every slight pretence,
Till perjuries are common as bad pence,
While thousands, careless of the damning sin,
Kiss the book's outside, who ne'er look within?
Hast thou, when Heaven has clothed thee with disgrace,
And, long provoked, repaid thee to thy face,
(For thou hast known eclipses, and endured
Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscured,
When sin has shed dishonour on thy brow;
And never of a sabler hue than now;)
Hast thou with heart perverse and conscience sear'd,

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* The Test Act, by which all persons holding any position of trust, civil or military, were obliged to receive the Holy Communion according to the usage of the Church of England. It was meant to exclude the Roman Catholics from office, and was repealed in 1828.

† Warburton, who wrote an essay called "The Necessity and Equity of a Test Law."

Despising all rebuke, still persevered;
And having chosen evil, scorn'd the voice
That cried Repent! and gloried in thy choice?
Thy fastings, when calamity at last
Suggests the expedient of a yearly fast,
What mean they? Canst thou dream there is a power
In lighter diet at a later hour,
To charm to sleep the threatening of the skies,
And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes?
The fast that wins deliverance, and suspends
The stroke that a vindictive God intends,
Is to renounce hypocrisy; to draw
Thy life upon the pattern of the law;
To war with pleasure, idolised before;
To vanquish lust, and wear its yoke no more.
All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence,
Is wooing mercy by renew'd offence.
Hast thou within thee sin, that in old time
Brought fire from heaven, the sex-abusing crime,
Whose horrid perpetration stamps disgrace
Baboons are free from, upon human race?
Think on the fruitful and well-water'd spot
That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,
Where Paradise seem'd still vouchsafed on earth,
Burning and scorch'd into perpetual dearth;
Or, in his words who damn'd the base desire,
Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire:
Then Nature injured, scandalised, defiled,
Unveil'd her blushing cheek, look'd on and smiled;
Beheld with joy the lovely scene defaced,
And praised the wrath that laid her beauties waste.
Far be the thought from any verse of mine,
And farther still the form'd and fix'd design,
To thrust the charge of deeds that I detest
Against an innocent unconscious breast;
The man that dares traduce, because he can
With safety to himself, is not a man.
An individual is a sacred mark,
Not to be pierc'd in play, or in the dark;
But public censure speaks a public foe,
Unless a zeal for virtue guide the blow.
The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,
From mean self-interest and ambition clear,
Their hope in Heaven, servility their scorn,
Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn,
Their wisdom pure, and given them from above,
Their usefulness ensured by zeal and love,
As meek as the man Moses, and withal

As bold as, in Agrippa's presence, Paul,
Should fly the world's contaminating touch,
Holy and unpolluted:—Are thine such?
Except a few with Eli's spirit blest,
Hophni and Phinehas may describe the rest.
Where shall a teacher look, in days like these,
For ears and hearts that he can hope to please?
Look to the poor—the simple and the plain
Will hear perhaps thy salutary strain:
Humility is gentle, apt to learn,
Speak but the word, will listen and return.
Alas, not so! the poorest of the flock
Are proud, and set their faces as a rock:
Denied that earthly opulence they choose,
God's better gift they scoff at and refuse.
The rich, the produce of a nobler stem,
Are more intelligent at least,—try them.
Oh vain inquiry! they without remorse
Are altogether gone a devious course,
Where beckoning Pleasure leads them, wildly stray;
Have burst the bands, and cast the yoke away.
Now, borne upon the wings of truth sublime,
Review thy dim original and prime.
This island spot of unreclaim'd rude earth,
The cradle that received thee at thy birth,
Was rock'd by many a rough Norwegian blast,
And Danish howlings scared thee as they pass'd;
For thou wast born amid the din of arms,
And suck'd a breast that panted with alarms.
While yet thou wast a grovelling, puling chit,
Thy bones not fashion'd, and thy joints not knit,
The Roman taught thy stubborn knee to bow,
Though twice a Cæsar could not bend thee now;
His victory was that of orient light,
When the sun's shafts disperse the gloom of night.
Thy language at this distant moment shows
How much the country to the conqueror owes;
Expressive, energetic, and refined,
It sparkles with the gems he left behind.
He brought thy land a blessing when he came,
He found thee savage, and he left thee tame;
Taught thee to clothe thy pink'd and painted hide,
And grac'd thy figure with a soldier's pride;
He sow'd the seeds of order where he went,
Improv'd thee far beyond his own intent,
And while he rule1 thee by the sword alone,
Made thee at last a warrior like his own.
Religion, if in heavenly truths attir'd,

Needs only to be seen to be admired;
But thine, as dark as witcheries of the night,
Was form'd to harden hearts and shock the sight;
Thy Druids struck the well-strung harps they bore
With fingers deeply dyed in human gore;
And while the victim slowly bled to death,
Upon the tolling chords rung out his dying breath.
Who brought the lamp that with awaking beams
Dispell'd thy gloom, and broke away thy dreams,
Tradition, now decrepit, and worn out,
Babbler of ancient fables, leaves a doubt;
But still light reach'd thee; and those gods of thine,
Woden and Thor, each tottering in his shrine,
Fell, broken and defaced, at his own door,
As Dagon in Philistia long before.
But Rome with sorceries and magic wand
Soon raised a cloud that darken'd every land;
And thine was smother'd in the stench and fog
Of Tiber's marshes and the Papal bog.
Then priests with bulls and briefs, and shaven crowns,
And griping fists and unrelenting frowns,
Legates and delegates with powers from hell,
Though heavenly in pretension, fleeced thee well;
And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind,
Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind.*
Thy soldiery, the Pope's well-managed pack,
Were train'd beneath his lash, and knew the smack,
And when he laid them on the scent of blood,
Would hunt a Saracen through fire and flood.
Lavish of life, to win an empty tomb,
That proved a mint of wealth, a mine to Rome,
They left their bones beneath unfriendly skies,
His worthless absolution all the prize.
Thou wast the veriest slave in days of yore,
That ever dragg'd a chain or tugg'd an oar;
Thy monarchs arbitrary, fierce, unjust,
Themselves the slaves of bigotry or lust,
Disdain'd thy counsels, only in distress
Found thee a goodly sponge for Power to press.
Thy chiefs, the lords of many a petty fee,
Provoked and harass'd, in return plagued thee;
Call'd thee away from peaceable employ,
Domestic happiness and rural joy,
To waste thy life in arms, or lay it down
In causeless feuds and bickerings of their own.
Thy Parliaments adored on bended knees

* Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.—C.

The sovereignty they were convened to please;
Whate'er was ask'd, too timid to resist,
Complied with, and were graciously dismiss'd;
And if some Spartan soul a doubt express'd,
And blushing at the tameness of the rest,
Dared to suppose the subject had a choice,
He was a traitor by the general voice.
Oh slave! with powers thou didst not dare exert,
Verse cannot stoop so low as thy desert!
It shakes the sides of splenetic Disdain,
Thou self-entitled ruler of the main,
To trace thee to the date when yon fair sea,
That clips thy shores, had no such charms for thee;
When other nations flew from coast to coast,
And thou had'st neither fleet nor flag to boast.
   Kneel now, and lay thy forehead in the dust!
Blush if thou canst; not petrified thou must:
Act but an honest and a faithful part;
Compare what then thou wast with what thou art;
And God's disposing providence confess'd,
Obduracy itself must yield the rest.—
Then art thou bound to serve Him, and to prove,
Hour after hour, thy gratitude and love.
   Has He not hid thee and thy favour'd land.
For ages, safe beneath His sheltering hand,
Given thee His blessing on the clearest proof,
Bid nations leagued against thee stand aloof.
And charged Hostility and Hate to roar
Where else they would, but not upon thy shore?
His power secured thee, when presumptuous Spain
Baptized her fleet Invincible in vain;
Her gloomy monarch, doubtful and resign'd
To every pang that racks an anxious mind,
Ask'd of the waves that broke upon his coast,
What tidings? and the surge replied—All lost!
And when the Stuart,* leaning on the Scot,
Then too much fear'd, and now too much forgot,
Pierced to the very centre of the realm,†
And hoped to seize his abdicated helm,
'Twas but to prove how quickly, with a frown,
He that had raised thee could have pluck'd thee down.
Peculiar is the grace by thee possess'd,
Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest;
Thy thunders travel over earth and seas,
And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.
'Tis thus, extending His tempestuous arm,

* Prince Charles Edward. † Derby.

Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm,
While His own heaven surveys the troubled scene,
And feels no change, unshaken and serene.
Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine,
Pours out a flood of splendour upon thine;
Thou hast as bright an interest in her rays
As ever Roman had in Rome's best days.
True freedom is where no restraint is known
That Scripture, justice, and good sense disown,
Where only vice and injury are tied,
And all from shore to shore is free beside.
Such freedom is,—and Windsor's hoary towers
Stood trembling at the boldness of thy powers,
That won a nymph on that immortal plain,*
Like her the fabled Phœbus woo'd in vain:
He found the laurel only;—happier you,
The unfading laurel and the virgin too!
Now think, if Pleasure have a thought to spare,
If God himself be not beneath her care;
If business, constant as the wheels of time,
Can pause one hour to read a serious rhyme;
If the new mail thy merchants now receive,
Or expectation of the next give leave;
Oh think, if chargeable with deep arrears
For such indulgence gilding all thy years,
How much, though long neglected, shining yet,
The beams of heavenly truth have swell'd the debt.
When persecuting zeal made royal sport
With tortured innocence in Mary's court,
And Bonner, blithe as shepherd at a wake,
Enjoy'd the show, and danced about the stake;
The sacred Book, its value understood,
Received the seal of martyrdom in blood.
Those holy men, so full of truth and grace,
Seem to reflection of a different race,
Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere,
In such a cause they could not dare to fear;
They could not purchase earth with such a prize,
Or spare a life too short to reach the skies.
From them to thee, convey'd along the tide,
Their streaming hearts pour'd freely when they died,
Those truths, which neither use nor years impair,
Invite thee, woo thee, to the bliss they share.
What dotage will not Vanity maintain?

* Alluding to the grant of Magna Charta, which was extorted from King John by the barons at Runnymede, near Windsor.

What web too weak to catch a modern brain?
The moles and bats in full assembly find,
On special search, the keen-eyed eagle blind.
And did they dream, and art thou wiser now?
Prove it:—if better, I submit and bow.
Wisdom and Goodness are twinborn, one heart
Must hold both sisters, never seen apart.
So then—as darkness overspread the deep,
Ere Nature rose from her eternal sleep,
And this delightful earth, and that fair sky,
Leap'd out of nothing, call'd by the Most High;
By such a change thy darkness is made light,
Thy chaos order, and thy weakness might;
And He, whose power mere nullity obeys,
Who found thee nothing, formed thee for His praise.
To praise Him is to serve Him, and fulfil,
Doing and suffering, His unquestion'd will;
'Tis to believe what men inspired of old,
Faithful, and faithfully inform'd, unfold;
Candid and just, with no false aim in view,
To take for truth what cannot but be true,
To learn in God's own school the Christian part,
And bind the task assign'd thee to thine heart.
Happy the man there seeking and there found,
Happy the nation where such men abound!
How shall a verse impress thee? by what name
Shall I adjure thee not to court thy shame?
By theirs whose bright example unimpeach'd
Directs thee to that eminence they reach'd,
Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires?
Or His, who touch'd their hearts with hallow'd fires?
Their names, alas! in vain reproach an age,
Whom all the vanities they scorn'd engage;
And His, that seraphs tremble at, is hung
Disgracefully on every trifler's tongue,
Or serves the champion in forensic war
To flourish and parade with at the bar.
Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea,
If interest move thee, to persuade e'en thee;
By every charm that smiles upon her face,
By joys possess'd, and joys still held in chase,
If dear society be worth a thought,
And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not,
Reflect that these and all that seems thine own,
Held by the tenure of His will alone,
Like angels in the service of their Lord,
Remain with thee, or leave thee at His word;
That gratitude and temperance in our use

Of what He gives unsparing and profuse,
Secure the favour and enhance the joy,
That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.
But above all reflect, how cheap soe'er
Those rights that millions envy thee appear,
And though resolved to risk them, and swim down
The tide of pleasure, heedless of his frown,
That blessings truly sacred, and when given,
Mark'd with the signature and stamp of Heaven,
The word of prophecy, those truths divine
Which make that Heaven, if thou desire it, thine,
(Awful alternative! believed, beloved,
Thy glory—and thy shame if unapproved,)
Are never long vouchsafed, if push'd aside
With cold disgust or philosophic pride;
And that judicially withdrawn, disgrace,
Error, and darkness occupy their place.
A world is up in arms, and thou, a spot
Not quickly found if negligently sought,
Thy soul as ample as thy bounds are small,
Endurest the brunt, and darest defy them all;
And wilt thou join to this bold enterprise
A bolder still, a contest with the skies?
Remember, if He guard thee, and secure,
Whoe'er assails thee, thy success is sure;
But if He leave thee, though the skill and power
Of nations, sworn to spoil thee and devour,
Were all collected in thy single arm,
And thou could'st laugh away the fear of harm,
That strength would fail, opposed against the push
And feeble onset of a pigmy rush.
Say not (and if the thought of such defence
Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence)
What nation amongst all my foes, is free
From crimes as base as any charg'd on me?
Their measure fill'd, they too shall pay the debt,
Which God, though long forborne, will not forget.
But know that wrath divine, when most severe,
Makes justice still the guide of his career,
And will not punish in one mingled crowd,
Them without light, and thee without a cloud.
Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beech,
Still murmuring with the solemn truths I teach;
And while at intervals a cold blast sings
Through the dry leaves, and pants upon the strings,
My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament
A nation scourg'd, yet tardy to repent.
I know the warning song is sung in vain,

That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain:
But if a sweeter voice, and one design'd
A blessing to my country and mankind,
Reclaim the wandering thousands, and bring home
A flock so scatter'd and so wont to roam,
Then place it once again between my knees;
The sound of truth will then be sure to please;
And truth alone, where'er my life be cast,
In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,
Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last.



HOPE.

ARGUMENT.

Human life—The charms of Nature remain the same though they appear different in youth and age—Frivolity of fashionable life—Value of life—The works of the Creator evidences of His attributes—Nature the handmaid of grace—Character of Hope—Man naturally stubborn and intractable—His conduct in different stations—Death's honours—Each man's belief right in his own eyes—Simile of Ethelred's hospitality—Mankind quarrel with the Giver of eternal life, on account of the terms on which it is offered—Opinions on this subject—Spread of the Gospel—The Greenland Missions—Contrast of the unconverted and converted heathen—Character of Leuconomus—The man of pleasure the blindest of bigots—Any hope preferred to that required by the Scripture—Human nature opposed to Truth—Apostrophe to Truth—Picture of one conscience-smitten—The pardoned sinner—Conclusion.

———"Doceas iter, et sacra ostia pandas."
VIRG., *Æn.* 6.

ASK what is human life—the sage replies,
With disappointment lowering in his eyes,
"A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,
A scene of fancied bliss and heartfelt care,
Closing at last in darkness and despair.
The poor, inured to drudgery and distress,
Act without aim, think little, and feel less,
And nowhere, but in feign'd Arcadian scenes,
Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means.
Riches are pass'd away from hand to hand,
As fortune, vice, or folly may command;
As in a dance the pair that take the lead
Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed,
So shifting and so various is the plan
By which Heaven rules the mix'd affairs of man;
Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd,
The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud;
Business is labour, and man's weakness such,
Pleasure is labour too, and tires as much,
The very sense of it foregoes its use,
By repetition pall'd, by age obtuse.
Youth lost in dissipation, we deplore,
Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore:

Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,
Too many, yet too few to make us wise."
Dangling his cane about, and taking snuff,
Lothario cries, "What philosophic stuff!"—
Oh, querulous and weak!—whose useless brain
Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain
Whose eye reverted weeps o'er all the past,
Whose prospect shews thee a disheartening waste;
Would agé in thee resign his wintry reign,
And youth invigorate that frame again,
Renew'd desire would grace with other speech
Joys always prized, when placed within our reach.
For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom
That overhangs the borders of thy tomb,
See Nature gay as when she first began,
With smiles alluring her admirer man;
She spreads the morning over eastern hills,
Earth glitters with the drops the night distils,
The sun obedient at her call appears,
To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears;
Banks clothed with flowers, groves fill'd with sprightly sounds
The yellow tilth, green meads, rocks, rising grounds,
Streams edged with osiers, fattening every field,
Where'er they flow, now seen and now conceal'd;
From the blue rim, where skies and mountains meet
Down to the very turf beneath thy feet,
Ten thousand charms, that only fools despise,
Or pride can look at with indifferent eyes,
All speak one language, all with one sweet voice
Cry to her universal realm, Rejoice!
Man feels the spur of passions and desires,
And she gives largely more than he requires;
Not that his hours devoted all to care,
Hollow-eyed abstinence, and lean despair,
The wretch may pine, while to his smell, taste, sight,
She holds a Paradise of rich delight;
But gently to rebuke his awkward fear,
To prove that what she gives, she gives sincere,
To banish hesitation, and proclaim
His happiness her dear, her only aim.
'Tis grave Philosophy's absurdest dream,
That Heaven's intentions are not what they seem,
That only shadows are dispensed below,
And earth has no reality but woe."
Thus things terrestrial wear a different hue,
As youth or age persuades; and neither true:
So, Flora's wreath through colour'd crystal seen,
The rose or lily appears blue or green,

But still the imputed tints are those alone
The medium represents, and not their own.
To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undress'd,
To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best,
Till half the world comes rattling at his door,
To fill the dull vacuity till four;
And just when evening turns the blue vault gray,
To spend two hours in dressing for the day;
To make the Sun a bauble without use,
Save for the fruits his heavenly beams produce;
Quite to forget, or deem it worth no thought,
Who bids him shine, or if he shine or not;
Through mere necessity to close his eyes
Just when the larks and when the shepherds rise;
Is such a life, so tediously the same,
So void of all utility or aim,
That poor Jonquil, with almost every breath,
Sighs for his exit, vulgarly call'd death:
For he, with all his follies, has a mind
Not yet so blank, or fashionably blind,
But now and then perhaps a feeble ray
Of distant wisdom shoots across his way,
By which he reads, that life without a plan,
As useless as the moment it began,
Serves merely as a soil for discontent
To thrive in; an incumbrance ere half spent.
Oh! weariness beyond what asses feel,
That tread the circuit of the cistern wheel;
A dull rotation, never at a stay,
Yesterday's face twin image of to-day,
While conversation, an exhausted stock,
Grows drowsy as the clicking of a clock.
No need, he cries, of gravity stuff'd out
With academic dignity devout,
To read wise lectures, vanity the text;
Proclaim the remedy, ye learned, next;
For truth self-evident, with pomp impress'd
Is vanity surpassing all the rest.
That remedy, not hid in deeps profound,
Yet seldom sought where only to be found,
While passion turns aside from its due scope
The inquirer's aim, that remedy is Hope.
Life is His gift, from whom whate'er life needs,
With every good and perfect gift, proceeds;
Bestow'd on man, like all that we partake,
Royally, freely, for His bounty's sake;
Transient, indeed, as is the fleeting hour,
And yet the seed of an immortal flower,

Design'd in honour of His endless love,
To fill with fragrance His abode above;
No trifle, howsoever short it seem,
And, howsoever shadowy, no dream;
Its value, what no thought can ascertain,
Nor all an angel's eloquence explain.
Men deal with life as children with their play,
Who first misuse, then cast their toys away;
Live to no sober purpose, and contend
That their Creator had no serious end.
When God and man stand opposite in view,
Man's disappointment must, of course, ensue.
The just Creator condescends to write,
In beams of inextinguishable light,
His names of wisdom, goodness, power, and love,
On all that blooms below, or shines above,
To catch the wandering notice of mankind,
And teach the world, if not perversely blind,
His gracious attributes, and prove the share
His offspring hold in His paternal care.
If, led from earthly things to things divine,
His creature thwart not His august design,
Then praise is heard instead of reasoning pride,
And captious cavil and complaint subside.
Nature, employ'd in her allotted place,
Is handmaid to the purposes of Grace;
By good vouchsafed makes known superior good,
And bliss not seen by blessings understood:
That bliss, reveal'd in Scripture, with a glow
Bright as the covenant-ensuring bow,
Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn
Of sensual evil, and thus Hope is born.
Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all
That men have deem'd substantial since the fall,
Yet has the wondrous virtue to educe
From emptiness itself a real use;
And while she takes, as at a father's hand,
What health and sober appetite demand,
From fading good derives, with chemic art,
That lasting happiness, a thankful heart.
Hope with uplifted foot set free from earth,
Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,
On steady wings sails through the immense abyss,
Plucks amaranthine joys from bowers of bliss,
And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here,
With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.
Hope, as an anchor, firm and sure, holds fast
The Christian vessel, and defies the blast.

Hope! nothing else can nourish and secure
His new-born virtues, and preserve him pure;
Hope! let the wretch, once conscious of the joy,
Whom now despairing agonies destroy,
Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,
What treasures centre, what delights in thee.
Had he the gems, the spices, and the land
That boasts the treasure, all at his command,
The fragrant grove, the inestimable mine,
Were light, when weigh'd against one smile of thine.
  Though, clasp'd and cradled in his nurse's arms
He shines with all a cherub's artless charms,
Man is the genuine offspring of revolt,
Stubborn and sturdy, a wild ass's colt;
His passions, like the watery stores that sleep
Beneath the smiling surface of the deep,
Wait but the lashes of a wintry storm,
To frown and roar, and shake his feeble form.
From infancy through childhood's giddy maze,
Froward at school, and fretful in his plays,
The puny tyrant burns to subjugate
The free republic of the whip-gig state.
If one, his equal in athletic frame,
Or, more provoking still, of nobler name,
Dare step across his arbitrary views,
An Iliad, only not in verse, ensues:
The little Greeks look trembling at the scales,
Till the best tongue, or heaviest hand prevails.
  Now see him launch'd into the world at large;
If priest, supinely droning o'er his charge,
Their fleece his pillow, and his weekly drawl,
Though short, too long, the price he pays for all.
If lawyer, loud whatever cause he plead,
But proudest of the worst, if that succeed.
Perhaps a grave physician, gathering fees,
Punctually paid for lengthening out disease;
No COTTON,* whose humanity sheds rays
That make superior skill his second praise.
If arms engage him, he devotes to sport
His date of life, so likely to be short;
A soldier may be anything, if brave,
So may a tradesman, if not quite a knave.
Such stuff the world is made of; and mankind,
To passion, interest, pleasure, whim, resign'd,



* Dr. Nathaniel Cotton, author of the "Visions in Verse." He kept a lunatic asylum at St. Alban's, in which Cowper was cured of his first attack of insanity.

Insist on, as if each were his own Pope,
Forgiveness and the privilege of hope;
But Conscience, in some awful silent hour,
When captivating lusts have lost their power,
Perhaps when sickness, or some fearful dream,
Reminds him of religion, hated theme!
Starts from the down, on which she lately slept,
And tells of laws despised, at least not kept,
Shews with a pointing finger, but no noise,
A pale procession of past sinful joys,
All witnesses of blessings foully scorn'd,
A life abused, and not to be suborn'd.
"Mark these," she says; "these, summon'd from afar,
Begin their march to meet thee at the bar;
There find a Judge, inexorably just,
And perish there, as all presumption must."
Peace be to those (such peace as earth can give)
Who live in pleasure, dead even while they live;
Born capable indeed of heavenly truth,
But down to latest age, from earliest youth,
Their mind a wilderness through want of care,
The plough of wisdom never entering there.
Peace (if insensibility may claim
A right to the meek honours of her name)
To men of pedigree; their noble race,
Emulous always of the nearest place
To any throne, except the throne of grace;
Let cottagers and unenlighten'd swains
Revere the laws they dream that Heaven ordains,
Resort on Sundays to the house of prayer,
And ask, and fancy they find, blessings there;
Themselves, perhaps, when weary they retreat
To enjoy cool nature in a country seat,
To exchange the centre of a thousand trades,
For clumps, and lawns, and temples, and cascades,
May now and then their velvet cushions take,
And seem to pray, for good example sake;
Judging, in charity no doubt, the town
Pious enough, and having need of none.
Kind souls! to teach their tenantry to prize
What they themselves, without remorse, despise:
Nor hope have they, nor fear, of aught to come,
As well for them had prophecy been dumb;
They could have held the conduct they pursue,
Had Paul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew;
And truth, proposed to reasoners wise as they,
Is a pearl cast—completely cast away.
They die.—Death lends them, pleased and as in sport,

All the grim honours of his ghastly court.
Far other paintings grace the chamber now,
Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow:
The busy heralds hang the sable scene
With mournful 'scutcheons, and dim lamps between;
Proclaim their titles to the crowd around,
But they that wore them move not at the sound;
The coronet, placed idly at their head,
Adds nothing now to the degraded dead,
And even the star that glitters on the bier,
Can only say—Nobility lies here.
Peace to all such!—'twere pity to offend
By useless censure whom we cannot mend;
Life without hope can close but in despair,
'Twas there we found them, and must leave them there.
 As when two pilgrims in a forest stray,
Both may be lost, yet each in his own way;
So fares it with the multitudes beguiled
In vain opinion's waste and dangerous wild;
Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among,
Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong.
But here, alas! the fatal difference lies,
Each man's belief is right in his own eyes;
And he that blames what they have blindly chose
Incurs resentment for the love he shows.
 Say, botanist! within whose province fall
The cedar and the hyssop on the wall,
Of all that deck the lanes, the fields, the bowers,
What parts the kindred tribes of weeds and flowers?
Sweet scent, or lovely form, or both combined,
Distinguish every cultivated kind;
The want of both denotes a meaner breed,
And Chloe fro n her garland picks the weed.
Thus hopes of every sort, whatever sect
Esteem them, sow them, rear them, and protect,
If wild in nature, and not duly found,
Gethsemane! in thy dear hallow'd ground,
That cannot bear the blaze of Scripture light,
Nor cheer the spirit, nor refresh the sight,
Nor animate the soul to Christian deeds,
(Oh, cast them from thee!) are weeds, arrant weeds.
 Ethelred's house, the centre of six ways,
Diverging each from each, like equal rays,
Himself as bountiful as April rains,
Lord paramount of the surrounding plains,
Would give relief of bed and board to none,
But guests that sought it in the appointed ONE;
And they might enter at his open door,

E'en till his spacious hall would hold no more.
He sent a servant forth by every road,
To sound his horn, and publish it abroad,
That all might mark—knight, menial, high, and low,
An ordinance it concern'd them much to know.
If, after all, some headstrong hardy lout
Would disobey, though sure to be shut out,
Could he with reason murmur at his case,
Himself sole author of his own disgrace?
No! the decree was just, and without flaw,
And he that made had right to make the law;
His sovereign power and pleasure unrestrain'd,
The wrong was his who wrongfully complain'd.
   Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife
With Him, the Donor of eternal life,
Because the deed, by which His love confirms
The largess He bestows, prescribes the terms.
Compliance with His will your lot ensures,
Accept it only, and the boon is yours:
And sure it is as kind to smile and give,
As with a frown to say, "Do this, and live."
Love is not pedlar's trumpery, bought and sold,
He will give freely, or He will withhold;
His soul abhors a mercenary thought,
And him as deeply who abhors it not.
He stipulates indeed, but merely this,
That man will freely take an unbought bliss,
Will trust Him for a faithful generous part,
Nor set a price upon a willing heart.
Of all the ways that seem to promise fair
To place you where His saints His presence share,
This only can; for this plain cause, express'd
In terms as plain, Himself has shut the rest.
But oh the strife, the bickering, and debate,
The tidings of unpurchased heaven create!
The flirted fan, the bridle, and the toss,
All speakers, yet all language at a loss.
From stuccoed walls smart arguments rebound;
And beaus, adepts in everything profound,
Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.
Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites,
The explosion of the levell'd tube excites,
Where mouldering abbey walls o'erhang the glade,
And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade;
The screaming nations, hovering in mid air,
Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,
And seem to warn him never to repeat
His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.

"Adieu," Vinosa cries, ere yet he sips
The purple bumper trembling at his lips,
"Adieu to all morality! if Grace
Make works a vain ingredient in the case.
The Christian hope is—Waiter, draw the cork—
If I mistake not—Blockhead! with a fork!
Without good works, whatever some may boast,
Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast.
My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes,
That Heaven will weigh man's virtues and his crimes
With nice attention in a righteous scale,
And save, or damn, as these or those prevail.
I plant my foot upon this ground of trust,
And silence every fear with—God is just.
But if perchance on some dull drizzling day
A thought intrude, that says, or seems to say,
If thus the important cause is to be tried,
Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong side?
I soon recover from these needless frights,
And, God is merciful!—sets all to rights.
Thus between justice, as my prime support,
And mercy, fled to as the last resort,
I glide and steal along with heaven in view,
And,—pardon me, the bottle stands with you."
"I never will believe," the Colonel cries,
"The sanguinary schemes that some devise,
Who make the good Creator, on their plan,
A being of less equity than man.
If appetite, or what divines call lust,
Which men comply with, even because they must,
Be punish'd with perdition, who is pure?
Then theirs, no doubt, as well as mine, is sure.
If sentence of eternal pain belong
To every sudden slip and transient wrong,
Then Heaven enjoins the fallible and frail
A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail.
My creed, (whatever some creed-makers mean
By Athanasian nonsense, or Nicene,)
My creed is, he is safe that does his best,
And death's a doom sufficient for the rest."
"Right," says an Ensign; "and for aught I see,
Your faith and mine substantially agree;
The best of every man's performance here
Is to discharge the duties of his sphere.
A lawyer's dealings should be just and fair,
Honesty shines with great advantage there;
Fasting and prayer sit well upon a priest,
A decent caution and reserve at least;

A soldier's best is, courage in the field,
With nothing here that wants to be conceal'd;
Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay;
A hand as liberal as the light of day:
The soldier thus endow'd, who never shrinks,
Nor closets up his thought whate'er he thinks,
Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,
Must go to heaven—and I must drink his health.
Sir Smug!" he cries, "(for lowest at the board,
Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,
His shoulders witnessing by many a shrug
How much his feelings suffer'd, sat Sir Smug,)
"Your office is to winnow false from true;
Come, prophet, drink, and tell us—What think you?"
   Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,
Which they that woo preferment rarely pass,
"Fallible man," the church-bred youth replies,
"Is still found fallible, however wise;
And differing judgments serve but to declare,
hTat truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where.
Of all it ever was my lot to read,
Of critics now alive or long since dead,
The book of all the world that charm'd me most
Was,—well-a-day, the title-page was lost,—
The writer well remarks, a heart that knows
To take with gratitude what Heaven bestows,
With prudence always ready at our call,
To guide our use of it, is all in all.
Doubtless it is. To which, of my own store,
I superadd a few essentials more;
But these, excuse the liberty I take,
I waive just now, for conversation sake."—
Spoke like an oracle, they all exclaim,
And add Right Reverend to Smug's honour'd name.
   And yet our lot is given us in a land
Where busy arts are never at a stand;
Where Science points her telescopic eye,
Familiar with the wonders of the sky;
Where bold Inquiry, diving out of sight,
Brings many a precious pearl of truth to light;
Where nought eludes the persevering quest
That fashion, taste, or luxury suggest.
   But, above all, in her own light array'd,
See Mercy's grand apocalypse display'd!
The sacred book no longer suffers wrong,
Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue,
But speaks with plainness art could never mend,
What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.

God gives the word, the preachers throng around,
Live from His lips, and spread the glorious sound:
That sound bespeaks Salvation on her way,
The trumpet of a life-restoring day;
'Tis heard where England's eastern glory shines,
And in the gulfs of her Cornubian mines,
And still it spreads. See Germany send forth
Her sons* to pour it on the farthest north:
Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy
The rage and rigour of a polar sky,
And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose
On icy plains and in eternal snows.
  Oh, blest within the enclosure of your rocks,
Nor herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks;
No fertilising streams your fields divide,
That show reversed the villas on their side;
No groves have ye; no cheerful sound of bird,
Or voice of turtle in your land is heard;
Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell
Of those that walk at evening where ye dwell;
But Winter, arm'd with terrors here unknown,
Sits absolute on his unshaken throne;
Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste,
And bids the mountains he has built stand fast;
Beckons the legions of his storms away
From happier scenes, to make your land a prey
Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,
And scorns to share it with the distant sun.
—Yet Truth is yours, remote unenvied isle!
And Peace, the genuine offspring of her smile;
The pride of letter'd ignorance, that binds
In chains of error our accomplish'd minds,
That decks with all the splendour of the true,
A false religion, is unknown to you.
Nature indeed vouchsafes for our delight
The sweet vicissitudes of day and night;
Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer
Field, fruit, and flower, and every creature here:
But brighter beams than his who fires the skies
Have risen at length on your admiring eyes,
That shoot into your darkest caves the day
From which our nicer optics turn away.
  Here see the encouragement Grace gives to vice,
The dire effect of mercy without price!
What were they? what some fools are made by art,

* The Moravian Missionaries in Greenland. See Krantz's "History of Greenland."

They were by nature atheists, head and heart.
The gross idolatry blind heathens teach
Was too refined for them, beyond their reach.
Not even the glorious sun, though men revere
The monarch most that seldom will appear,
And though his beams that quicken where they shine,
May claim some right to be esteem'd divine,—
Not even the sun, desirable as rare,
Could bend one knee, engage one votary there;
They were, what base credulity believes
True Christians are, dissemblers, drunkards, thieves.
The full-gorged savage at his nauseous feast,
Spent half the darkness, and snored out the rest,—
Was one whom justice, on an equal plan
Denouncing death upon the sins of man,
Might almost have indulged with an escape,
Chargeable only with a human shape.
What are they now?—Morality may spare
Her grave concern, her kind suspicions there.
The wretch that once sang wildly, danced, and laugh'd,
And suck'd in dizzy madness with his draught,
Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways,
Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays;
Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,
Abhors the craft he boasted of before,
And he that stole has learn'd to steal no more.
Well spake the prophet, "Let the desert sing,
Where sprang the thorn the spiry fir shall spring,
And where unsightly and rank thistles grew,
Shall grow the myrtle and luxuriant yew."
Go now, and with important tone demand
On what foundation virtue is to stand,
If self-exalting claims be turn'd adrift,
And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift;
The poor reclaim'd inhabitant, his eyes
Glistening at once with pity and surprise,
Amazed that shadows should obscure the sight
Of one whose birth was in a land of light,
Shall answer; "Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free,
And made all pleasures else mere dross to me."
These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied
The common care that waits on all beside,
Wild as if nature there, void of all good,
Play'd only gambols in a frantic mood,
(Yet charge not heavenly skill with having plann'd
A plaything world, unworthy of his hand,)
Can see His love, though secret evil lurks
In all we touch, stamp'd plainly on His works;

Deem life a blessing with its numerous woes,
Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.
Hard task indeed o'er arctic seas to roam!
Is hope exotic? grows it not at home?
Yes; but an object bright as orient morn
May press the eye too closely to be borne;
A distant virtue we can all confess,
It hurts our pride and moves our envy less.
Leuconomus* (beneath well-sounding Greek
I slur a name a poet must not speak)
Stood pilloried on infamy's high stage,
And bore the pelting scorn of half an age;
The very butt of slander, and the blot
For every dart that malice ever shot.
The man that mention'd *him* at once dismiss'd
All mercy from his lips, and sneer'd and hiss'd;
His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
And perjury stood up to swear all true;
His aim was mischief and his zeal pretence,
His speech rebellion against common sense;
A knave when tried on honesty's plain rule,
And when by that of reason, a mere fool;
The world's best comfort was, his doom was pass'd,
Die when he might, he must be damn'd at last.
Now, Truth, perform thine office; waft aside
The curtain drawn by prejudice and pride,
Reveal (the man is dead)† to wondering eyes
This more than monster in his proper guise.
He loved the world that hated him; the tear
That dropp'd upon his Bible was sincere.
Assail'd by scandal and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life,
And he that forged and he that threw the dart
Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
Were copied close in him, and well transcribed;
He follow'd Paul; his zeal a kindred flame,
His apostolic charity the same,
Like him, cross'd cheerfully tempestuous seas,
Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease;
Like him he labour'd, and like him, content
To bear it, suffer'd shame where'er he went.
Blush, Calumny! and write upon his tomb,
If honest eulogy can spare thee room,

* Whitfield, the celebrated preacher and friend of Wesley.
† He died in America in 1770.

Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies,
Which aim'd at him, have pierc'd the offended skies;
And say, Blot out my sin, confess'd, deplored,
Against thine image in thy saint, O Lord!
  No blinder bigot, I maintain it still,
Than he who must have pleasure, come what will:
He laughs, whatever weapon truth may draw,
And deems her sharp artillery mere straw.
Scripture indeed is plain, but God and he
On Scripture ground are sure to disagree;
Some wiser rule must teach him how to live,
Than that his Maker has seen fit to give,
Supple and flexible as Indian cane,
To take the bend his appetites ordain,
Contriv'd to suit frail Nature's crazy case,
And reconcile his lusts with saving grace.
By this with nice precision of design,
He draws upon life's map a zigzag line,
That shews how far 'tis safe to follow sin,
And where his danger and God's wrath begin.
By this he forms, as pleased he sports along,
His well-pois'd estimate of right and wrong;
And finds the modish manners of the day,
Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.
  Build by whatever plan caprice decrees,
With what materials, on what ground you please,
Your hope shall stand unblamed, perhaps admired,
If not that hope the Scripture has required:
The strange conceits, vain projects, and wild dreams,
With which hypocrisy for ever teems,
(Though other follies strike the public eye
And raise a laugh,) pass unmolested by;
But if, unblameable in word and thought,
A MAN arise, a man whom God has taught,
With all Elijah's dignity of tone,
And all the love of the beloved John,
To storm the citadels they build in air,
And smite the untemper'd wall, 'tis death to spare,
To sweep away all refuges of lies,
And place, instead of quirks themselves devise,
LAMA SABACHTHANI before their eyes,—
To prove that without Christ all gain is loss,
All hope despair, that stands not on His cross,—
Except the few his God may have impress'd,
A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest.
  Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at least,
There dwells a consciousness in every breast,
That folly ends where genuine hope begins.

And he that finds his heaven must lose his sins.
Nature opposes with her utmost force
This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce,
And while Religion seems to be her view,
Hates with a deep sincerity the true:
For this, of all that ever influenced man,
Since Abel worshipp'd, or the world began,
This only spares no lust, admits no plea,
But makes him, if at all, completely free;
Sounds forth the signal, as she mounts her car,
Of an eternal, universal war;
Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles,
Scorns with the same indifference frowns and smiles,
Drives through the realms of Sin, where Riot reels,
And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels!
Hence all that is in man—pride, passion, art,
Powers of the mind, and feelings of the heart,
Insensible of Truth's almighty charms,
Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms!
While Bigotry, with well-dissembled fears,
His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears,
Mighty to parry and push by God's word
With senseless noise, his argument the sword,
Pretends a zeal for godliness and grace,
And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.
  Parent of Hope, immortal Truth, make known
Thy deathless wreaths and triumphs all thine own!
The silent progress of thy power is such,
Thy means so feeble, and despised so much,
That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,
And none can teach them but whom thou hast taught.
Oh! see me sworn to serve thee, and command
A painter's skill into a poet's hand;
That while I trembling trace a word divine,
Fancy may stand aloof from the design,
And light and shade and every stroke be thine.
  If ever thou hast felt another's pain,
If ever when he sigh'd, hast sigh'd again,
If ever on thy eyelid stood a tear
That pity had engender'd, drop one here.
This man was happy, had the world's good word,
And with it every joy it can afford;
Friendship and love seem'd tenderly at strife,
Which most should sweeten his untroubled life;
Politely learn'd, and of a gentle race,
Good breeding and good sense gave all a grace,
And whether at the toilet of the fair
He laughed and trifled, made him welcome there;

Or if in masculine debate he shared,
Ensured him mute attention and regard.
Alas, how changed! Expressive of his mind,
His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclined;
Those awful syllables—hell, death, and sin,
Though whispered, plainly tell what works within,
That conscience there performs her proper part,
And writes a doomsday sentence on his heart,
Forsaking, and forsaken of all friends,
He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends;
Hard task for one who lately knew no care,
And harder still as learnt beneath despair:
His hours no longer pass unmark'd away,
A dark importance saddens every day;
He hears the notice of the clock perplex'd,
And cries, "Perhaps eternity strikes next!"
Sweet music is no longer music here,
And laughter sounds like madness in his ear;
His grief the world of all her power disarms,
Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms:
God's holy word, once trivial in his view,
Now by the voice of his experience true,
Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone
Must spring that hope he pants to make his own.
Now let the bright reverse be known abroad;
Say man's a worm, and power belongs to God.
As when a felon whom his country's laws
Have justly doom'd for some atrocious cause,
Expects in darkness and heart-chilling fears,
The shameful close of all his mis-spent years,
If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,
A tempest usher in the dreaded morn,
Upon his dungeon walls the lightnings play,
The thunder seems to summon him away,
The warder at the door his key applies,
Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies:
If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,
When hope, long lingering, at last yields the ghost,
The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,
He drops at once his fetters and his fear,
A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,
And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.
Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs
The comfort of a few poor added days,
Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul
Of him whom Hope has with a touch made whole;
'Tis heaven, all heaven descending on the wings
Of the glad legions of the King of kings;

'Tis more,—'tis God diffused through every part,
'Tis God Himself triumphant in his heart.
Oh, welcome now the sun's once hated light,
His noon-day beams were never half so bright.
Not kindred minds alone are call'd to employ
Their hours, their days, in listening to his joy,
Unconscious nature, all that he surveys,
Rocks, groves, and streams, must join him in his praise.
These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth,
The scoff of wither'd age and beardless youth;
These move the censure and illiberal grin
Of fools that hate thee and delight in sin;
But these shall last when night has quench'd the pole,
And heaven is all departed as a scroll:
And when, as justice has long since decreed,
This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,
Then these thy glorious works, and they who share
That hope which can alone exclude despair,
Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,
The brightest wonders of an endless day.
Happy the bard (if that fair name belong
To him that blends no fable with his song)
Whose lines uniting by an honest art,
The faithful monitor's and poet's part,
Seek to delight that they may mend mankind,
And while they captivate, inform the mind;
Still happier, if he till a thankful soil,
And fruit reward his honourable toil:
But happier far who comfort those that wait
To hear plain truth at Judah's hallow'd gate:
Their language simple, as their manners meek,
No shining ornaments have they to seek;
Nor labour they, nor time nor talents waste,
In sorting flowers to suit a fickle taste;
But while they speak the wisdom of the skies,
Which art can only darken and disguise,
The abundant harvest, recompense divine,
Repays their work,—the gleaning only mine.



CHARITY.*

ARGUMENT.

Invocation to Charity—Social ties—Tribute to the humanity of Captain Cook—His character contrasted with that of Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico—Degradation of Spain—Purpose of commerce—Gifts of art—The slave-trade and slavery—Slavery unnatural and unchristian—The duty of abating the woes of that state, and of enlightening the mind of the slave, enforced—Apostrophe to Liberty—Charity of Howard—Pursuits of Philosophy Reason learns nothing aright without the lamp of Revelation—True charity the offspring of Divine truth—Supposed case of a blind nation and an optician—Portrait of Charity—Beauty of the Apostle's definition of it—Alms as the means of lulling conscience—Pride and ostentation—Character of satire—True charity inculcated—Christian charity should beuniversal—Happy effects that would result from universal charity.

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* The following rhyming epistle from Cowper to Newton explains his views in writing "Charity:"—

July 12, 1781.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I am going to send, what when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say, I suppose, there's nobody knows whether what I have got be verse or not;—by the tune and the time, it ought to be rhyme, but if it be, did you ever see, of late or of yore, such a ditty before?

I have writ *Charity*, not for popularity, but as well as I could, in hopes to do good; and if the reviewer should say "To be sure, the gentleman's muse wears Methodist shoes, you may know by his pace and talk about grace, that she and her bard have little regard for the taste and fashions, and ruling passions, and hoydening play, of the modern day; and though she assume a borrowed plume, and now and then wear a tittering air, 'tis only her plan to catch if she can, the giddy and gay, as they go that way, by a production on a new construction; she has baited her trap in hopes to snap all that may come with a sugar-plum." His opinion in this will not be amiss; 'tis what I intend, my principal end, and if I succeed, and folks should read, till a few are brought to a serious thought, I shall think I am paid for all I have said and all I have done, though I have run, many a time, after a rhyme, as far as from hence to the end of my sense, and by hook or by crook write another book, if I live and am here, another year.

I have heard before, of a room with a floor, laid upon springs and such like things, with so much art, in every part, that when you went in, you were forced to begin a minuet pace, with an air and a grace, swimming about, now in and now out, with a deal of state, in a figure of eight, without pipe or string, or any such thing: and now I have writ, in a rhyming fit, what will make you dance, and, as you advance, will keep you still, though against your will, dancing away, alert and gay, till you come to an end of what I have penned, which that you may do, ere madam and you are quite worn out with jigging about, I take my leave, and here you receive a bow profound, down to the ground, from your humble me.—W.C.

"Quo nihil majus meliusve terris
Fata donavere, bonique divi;
Nec dabunt, quamvis redeant in aurum
Tempora priscum."
HOR. lib. iv. Ode 2.

FAIREST and foremost of the train that wait
On man's most dignified and happiest state,
Whether we name thee Charity or Love,
Chief grace below, and all in all above,
Prosper (I press thee with a powerful plea)
A task I venture on, impell'd by thee:
Oh! never seen but in thy blest effects,
Or felt but in the soul that Heaven selects,
Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known
To other hearts, must have thee in his own.
Come, prompt me with benevolent desires,
Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,
And though disgraced and slighted, to redeem
A poet's name, by making thee the theme.
God, working ever on a social plan,
By various ties attaches man to man:
He made at first, though free and unconfined,
One man the common father of the kind;
That every tribe, though placed as He sees best,
Where seas or deserts part them from the rest,
Differing in language, manners, or in face,
Might feel themselves allied to all the race.
When Cook—lamented, and with tears as just
As ever mingled with heroic dust,*—
Steer'd Britain's oak into a world unknown,
And in his country's glory sought his own,
Wherever he found man, to nature true,
The rights of man were sacred in his view;
He soothed with gifts, and greeted with a smile,
The simple native of the new-found isle;
He spurn'd the wretch that slighted or withstood
The tender argument of kindred blood,
Nor would endure that any should control
His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.
But though some nobler minds a law respect,
That none shall with impunity neglect,
In baser souls unnumber'd evils meet,
To thwart its influence, and its end defeat.
While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved,
See Cortez odious for a world enslaved!

* Captain Cook, the great navigator, was killed by savages at Hawaii, 1779.

Where wast thou then, sweet Charity, where then,
Thou tutelary friend of helpless men?
Wast thou in monkish cells and nunneries found,
Or building hospitals on English ground?
No!—Mammon makes the world his legatee
Through fear, not love; and Heaven abhors the fee.
Wherever found, (and all men need thy care,)
Nor age nor infancy could find thee there.
The hand that slew till it could slay no more
Was glued to the sword-hilt with Indian gore.
Their prince, as justly seated on his throne
As vain imperial Philip* on his own,
Trick'd out of all his royalty by art,
That stripp'd him bare, and broke his honest heart,
Died, by the sentence of a shaven priest,
For scorning what they taught him to detest.
How dark the veil that intercepts the blaze
Of Heaven's mysterious purposes and ways!
God stood not, though He seem'd to stand, aloof,
And at this hour the conqueror feels the proof:
The wreath he won drew down an instant curse,
The fretting plague is in the public purse,
The canker'd spoil corrodes the pining state,
Starv'd by that indolence their mines create.
Oh, could their ancient Incas rise again,
How would they take up Israel's taunting strain!
"Art thou too fallen, Iberia? Do we see
The robber and the murderer weak as we?
Thou, that hast wasted earth, and dared despise
Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies,
Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid-
Low in the pits thine avarice has made.
We come with joy from our eternal rest,
To see the oppressor in his turn oppress'd.
Art thou the god the thunder of whose hand
Roll'd over all our desolated land,
Shook principalities and kingdoms down,
And made the mountains tremble at his frown?
The sword shall light upon thy boasted powers,
And waste them, as thy sword has wasted ours.
'Tis thus Omnipotence his law fulfils,
And vengeance executes what justice wills."
Again—the band of commerce was design'd
To associate all the branches of mankind;
And if a boundless plenty be the robe,
Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.

* The poet mistook: Cortez conquered Mexico in the reign of Charles V., not Philip II.

Wise to promote whatever end he means,
God opens fruitful Nature's various scenes;
Each climate needs what other climes produce,
And offers something to the general use;
No land but listens to the common call,
And in return receives supply from all.
This genial intercourse, and mutual aid,
Cheers what were else a universal shade,
Calls Nature from her ivy-mantled den,
And softens human rock-work into men.
Ingenious Art, with her expressive face,
Steps forth to fashion and refine the race,
Not only fills necessity's demand,
But overcharges her capacious hand:
Capricious taste itself can crave no more
Than she supplies from her abounding store:
She strikes out all that luxury can ask,
And gains new vigour at her endless task.
Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire,
The painter's pencil, and the poet's lyre;
From her the canvas borrows light and shade,
And verse, more lasting, hues that never fade.
She guides the finger o'er the dancing keys,
Gives difficulty all the grace of ease,
And pours a torrent of sweet notes around,
Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.
These are the gifts of Art; and Art thrives most
Where Commerce has enrich'd the busy coast;
He catches all improvements in his flight,
Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight,
Imports what others have invented well,
And stirs his own to match them or excel.
'Tis thus reciprocating each with each,
Alternately the nations learn and teach;
While Providence enjoins to every soul
A union with the vast terraqueous whole.
Heaven speed the canvas, gallantly unfurl'd
To furnish and accommodate a world,
To give the pole the produce of the sun,
And knit the unsocial climates into one!
Soft airs and gentle heavings of the wave
Impel the fleet, whose errand is to save,
To succour wasted regions, and replace
The smile of opulence in sorrow's face!
Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen,
Impede the bark that ploughs the deep serene,
Charged with a freight transcending in its worth
The gems of India, Nature's rarest birth,

That flies, like Gabriel on his Lord's commands,
A herald of God's love to pagan lands!
But ah! what wish can prosper, or what prayer,
For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge and span
And buy the muscles and the bones of man?
The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
All bonds of nature in that moment end;
And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
A stroke as fatal as the scythe of death.
The sable warrior, frantic with regret
Of her he loves and never can forget,
Loses in tears the far-receding shore,
But not the thought that they must meet no more.
Deprived of her and freedom at a blow,
What has he left that he can yet forego?
Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resign'd,
He feels his body's bondage in his mind;
Puts off his generous nature; and, to suit
His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.
  Oh, most degrading of all ills that wait
On man, a mourner in his best estate!
All other sorrows virtue may endure,
And find submission more than half a cure;
Grief is itself a medicine, and bestow'd
To improve the fortitude that bears the load,
To teach the wanderer, as his woes increase,
The path of wisdom, all whose paths are peace;
But slavery!—Virtue dreads it as her grave:
Patience itself is meanness in a slave;
Or if the will and sovereignty of God
Bid suffer it a while, and kiss the rod,
Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
And snap the chain the moment when you may.
Nature imprints upon whate'er we see,
That has a heart and life in it, "Be free!"
The beasts are charter'd—neither age nor force
Can quell the love of freedom in a horse:
He breaks the cord that held him at the rack,
And, conscious of an unincumber'd back,
Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein,
Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane,
Responsive to the distant neigh he neighs,
Nor stops, till, overleaping all delays,
He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.
  Canst thou, and honour'd with a Christian name,
Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame?
Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead

Expedience as a warrant for the deed?
So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold
To quit the forest and invade the fold:
So may the ruffian, who with ghostly glide,
Dagger in hand, steals close to your bedside;
Not he, but his emergence, forced the door,
He found it inconvenient to be poor.
Has God then given its sweetness to the cane,
Unless His laws be trampled on—in vain?
Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist,
Unless His right to rule it be dismiss'd?
Impudent blasphemy! So Folly pleads,
And Avarice being judge, with ease succeeds.

But grant the plea, and let it stand for just,
That man make man his prey, because he *must*;
Still there is room for pity to abate
And soothe the sorrows of so sad a state.
A Briton knows, or if he knows it not,
The Scripture placed within his reach, he ought,
That souls have no discriminating hue,
Alike important in their Maker's view;
That none are free from blemish since the fall,
And love divine has paid one price for all.
That wretch that works and weeps without relief
Has one that notices his silent grief.
He, from whose hand alone all power proceeds,
Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,
Considers *all* injustice with a frown;
But *marks* the man that treads his fellow down.
Begone!—the whip and bell in that hard hand
Are hateful ensigns of usurp'd command;
Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim
To scourge him, weariness his only blame.
Remember, Heaven has an avenging rod;
To smite the poor is treason against God!

Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brook'd,
While life's sublimest joys are overlook'd:
We wander o'er a sunburnt thirsty soil,
Murmuring and weary of our daily toil,
Forget to enjoy the palm-tree's offer'd shade,
Or taste the fountain in the neighbouring glade:
Else who would lose, that had the power to improve
The occasion of transmuting fear to love?
Oh, 'tis a godlike privilege to save,
And he that scorns it is himself a slave.
Inform his mind; one flash of heavenly day
Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away.
"Beauty for ashes" is a gift indeed,

And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed.
Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,
While gratitude and love made service sweet,
"My dear deliverer out of hopeless night,
Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,
I was a bondman on my native plain,
Sin forged, and ignorance made fast, the chain;
Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,
Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue;
Farewell my former joys! I sigh no more
For Africa's once loved, benighted shore;
Serving a benefactor, I am free;
At my best home, if not exiled from thee."
 Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds
A stream of liberal and heroic deeds;
The swell of pity, not to be confined
Within the scanty limits of the mind,
Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands
A rich deposit, on the bordering lands:
These have an ear for His paternal call,
Who makes some rich for the supply of all,
God's gift with pleasure in His praise employ;
And THORNTON is familiar with the joy.*
 Oh, could I worship aught beneath the skies,
That earth has seen, or fancy can devise,
Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,
Built by no mercenary vulgar hand,
With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair
As ever dress'd a bank, or scented summer air.
Duly, as ever on the mountain's height
The peep of morning shed a dawning light,
Again, when evening in her sober vest
Drew the grey curtain of the fading west,
My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise,
For the chief blessings of my fairest days:
But that were sacrilege;—praise is not thine,
But His who gave thee, and preserves thee mine:
Else I would say, and as I spake bid fly
A captive bird into the boundless sky,
"This triple realm adores thee;—thou art come
From Sparta hither, and art here at home.
We feel thy force still active, at this hour
Enjoy immunity from priestly power,
While conscience, happier than in ancient years,
Owns no superior but the God she fears.
Propitious spirit! yet expunge a wrong

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* John Thornton, a London merchant, famous for his philanthropy.

Thy rights have suffer'd, and our land, too long.
Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts that share
The fears and hopes of a commercial care;
Prisons expect the wicked, and were built
To bind the lawless and to punish guilt;
But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood,
Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood;
And honest merit stands on slippery ground,
Where covert guile and artifice abound.
Let just restraint, for public peace design'd,
Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind;
The foe of virtue has no claim to thee,
But let insolvent innocence go free."
  Patron of else the most despised of men,
Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen;
Verse, like the laurel its immortal meed,
Should be the guerdon of a noble deed;
I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame
(Charity chosen as my theme and aim)
I must incur, forgetting HOWARD's name.*
Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign
Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine,
To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,
To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe,
To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home,
Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,
But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,
And only sympathy like thine could reach;
That grief, sequester'd from the public stage,
Might smooth her feathers and enjoy her cage;
Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal,
The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.
Oh that the voice of clamour and debate,
That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state,
Were hush'd in favour of thy generous plea,
The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee!
  Philosophy that does not dream or stray,
Walks arm in arm with Nature all his way,
Compasses earth, dives into it, ascends
Whatever steep inquiry recommends.
Sees planetary wonders smoothly roll
Round other systems under her control,
Drinks wisdom at the milky stream of light
That cheers the silent journey of the night,
And brings at his return a bosom charged
With rich instruction, and a soul enlarged.

* John Howard, the celebrated philanthropist and visitor of prisons.

The treasured sweets of the capacious plan
That Heaven spreads wide before the view of man,
All prompt his pleased pursuit, and to pursue
Still prompt him, with a pleasure always new;
He too has a connecting power, and draws,
Man to the centre of the common cause.
Aiding a dubious and deficient sight
With a new medium and a purer light.
All truth is precious, if not all divine,
And what dilates the powers must needs refine.
He reads the skies, and, watching every change,
Provides the faculties an ampler range,
And wins mankind, as his attempts prevail,
A prouder station on the general scale.
But Reason still, unless divinely taught,
Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought;
The lamp of revelation only shows,
What human wisdom cannot but oppose,
That man in nature's richest mantle clad,
And graced with all philosophy can add,
Though fair without, and luminous within,
Is still the progeny and heir of sin.
Thus taught, down falls the plumage of his pride;
He feels his need of an unerring guide,
And knows that falling he shall rise no more,
Unless the power that bade him stand, restore.
This is indeed philosophy; this known,
Makes wisdom, worthy of the name, his own;
And without this, whatever he discuss,
Whether the space between the stars and us,
Whether he measure earth, compute the sea,
Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea,
The solemn trifler with his boasted skill
Toils much, and is a solemn trifler still:
Blind was he born, and his misguided eyes
Grown dim in trifling studies, blind he dies.
Self-knowledge truly learn'd, of course implies
The rich possession of a nobler prize;
For self to self, and God to man, reveal'd,
(Two themes to Nature's eye for ever seal'd,)
Are taught by rays that fly with equal pace
From the same centre of enlightening grace.
  Here stay thy foot; how copious and how clear
The o'erflowing well of Charity springs here!
Hark! 'tis the music of a thousand rills,
Some through the groves, some down the sloping hills,
Winding a secret or an open course,
And all supplied from an eternal source.

The ties of nature do but feebly bind,
And commerce partially reclaims, mankind;
Philosophy, without his heavenly guide,
May blow up self-conceit, and nourish pride;
But while his province is the reasoning part,
Has still a veil of midnight on his heart:
'Tis Truth divine exhibited on earth,
Gives Charity her being and her birth.

Suppose (when thought is warm and fancy flows,
What will not argument sometimes suppose?)
An isle possess'd by creatures of our kind,
Endued with reason, yet by nature blind.
Let supposition lend her aid once more,
And land some grave optician on the shore:
He claps his lens, if haply they may see,
Close to the part where vision ought to be;
But finds that though his tubes assist the sight,
They cannot give it, or make darkness light.
He reads wise lectures, and describes aloud
A sense they know not to the wondering crowd;
He talks of light and the prismatic hues,
As men of depth in erudition use;
But all he gains for his harangue is—"Well,
What monstrous lies some travellers will tell!"

The soul, whose sight all-quickening grace renews,
Takes the resemblance of the good she views,
As diamonds stripp'd of their opaque disguise,
Reflect the noonday glory of the skies.
She speaks of Him, her author, guardian, friend,
Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end,
In language warm as all that love inspires,
And, in the glow of her intense desires,
Pants to communicate her noble fires.
She sees a world stark blind to what employs
Her eager thought, and feeds her flowing joys;
Though wisdom hail them, heedless of her call,
Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all:
Herself as weak as her support is strong,
She feels that frailty she denied so long,
And, from a knowledge of her own disease,
Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.
Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,
The reign of genuine Charity commence:
Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears,
She still is kind, and still she perseveres;
The Truth she loves, a sightless world blaspheme,
'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream!
The danger they discern not they deny;

Laugh at their only remedy, and die.
But still a soul thus touch'd can never cease,
Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace.
Pure in her aim and in her temper mild,
Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child:
She makes excuses where she might condemn,
Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them;
Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast,
The worst suggested, she believes the best;
Not soon provoked, however stung and teased,
And if perhaps made angry, soon appeased;
She rather waives than will dispute her right:
And injured, makes forgiveness her delight.
  Such was the portrait an apostle drew,*
The bright original was one he knew;
Heaven held his hand, the likeness must be true.
  When one that holds communion with the skies
Has fill'd his urn where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis even as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.
So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
Has dropp'd her anchor and her canvas furl'd,
In some safe haven of our western world,
'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went,
The gale informs us, laden with the scent.
  Some seek, when queasy conscience has its qualms,
To lull the painful malady with alms;
But Charity not feign'd intends alone
Another's good—theirs centres in their own;
And too short-lived to reach the realms of peace,
Must cease for ever when the poor shall cease.
Flavia, most tender of her own good name,
Is rather careless of her sister's fame:
Her superfluity the poor supplies,
But if she touch a character, it dies.
The seeming virtue weigh'd against the vice,
She deems all safe, for she has paid the price:
No Charity but alms aught values she,
Except in porcelain on her mantle-tree.
How many deeds with which the world has rung,
From pride in league with ignorance have sprung!
But God o'errules all human follies still,
And bends the tough materials to His will.

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* 1 Cor. xiii.

A conflagration, or a wintry flood,
Has left some hundreds without home or food:
Extravagance and Avarice shall subscribe,
While fame and self-complacence are the bribe.
The brief proclaim'd, it visits every pew,
But first the squire's, a compliment but due:
With slow deliberation he unties
His glittering purse, that envy of all eyes,
And while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm,
Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm;
Till finding, what he might have found before,
A smaller piece amidst the precious store,
Pinch'd close between his finger and his thumb,
He half exhibits, and then drops the sum.
Gold to be sure!—Throughout the town 'tis told
How the good squire gives never less than gold.
From motives such as his, though not the best,
Springs in due time supply for the distress'd;
Not less effectual than what love bestows,
Except that Office clips it as it goes.
  But lest I seem to sin against a friend,
And wound the grace I mean to recommend,
(Though vice derided with a just design
Implies no trespass against love divine,)
Once more I would adopt the graver style;
A teacher should be sparing of his smile.
  Unless a love of virtue light the flame,
Satire is, more than those he brands, to blame;
He hides behind a magisterial air
His own offences, and strips others bare;
Affects indeed a most humane concern,
That men, if gently tutor'd, will not learn;
That mulish folly, not to be reclaim'd
By softer methods, must be made ashamed;
But (I might instance in St. Patrick's dean)*
Too often rails to gratify his spleen.
Most satirists are indeed a public scourge;
Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge;
Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirr'd,
The milk of their good purpose all to curd.
Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,
By lean despair upon an empty purse,
The wild assassins start into the street,
Prepared to poniard whomsoe'er they meet.
No skill in swordmanship, however just,
Can be secure against a madman's thrust;

* Dean Swift.

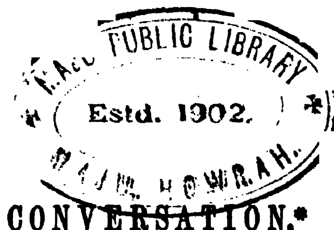
And even virtue, so unfairly match'd,
Although immortal, may be prick'd or scratch'd.
When scandal has new minted an old lie,
Or tax'd invention for a fresh supply,
'Tis call'd a satire, and the world appears
Gathering around it with erected ears:
A thousand names are toss'd into the crowd,
Some whisper'd softly, and some twang'd aloud,
Just as the sapience of an author's brain
Suggests it safe or dangerous to be plain.
Strange! how the frequent interjected dash
Quickens a market, and helps off the trash;
The important letters that include the rest
Serve as a key to those that are suppress'd;
Conjecture gripes the victims in his paw,
The world is charm'd, and Scrib escapes the law.
So when the cold damp shades of night prevail,
Worms may be caught by either head or tail;
Forcibly drawn from many a close recess,
They meet with little pity, no redress;
Plunged in the stream they lodge upon the mud,
Food for the famish'd rovers of the flood.
All zeal for a reform that gives offence
To peace and charity is mere pretence:
A bold remark, but which, if well applied,
Would humble many a towering poet's pride.
Perhaps the man was in a sportive fit,
And had no other play-place for his wit;
Perhaps, enchanted with the love of fame,
He sought the jewel in his neighbour's shame;
Perhaps—whatever end he might pursue,
The cause of virtue could not be his view.
At every stroke wit flashes in our eyes;
The turns are quick, the polish'd points surprise,
But shine with cruel and tremendous charms,
That, while they please, possess us with alarms;
So have I seen, (and hasten'd to the sight
On all the wings of holiday delight,)
Where stands that monument of ancient power,
Named with emphatic dignity, the Tower,
Guns, halberds, swords and pistols, great and small,
In starry forms disposed upon the wall:
We wonder, as we gazing stand below,
That brass and steel should make so fine a show;
But though we praise the exact designer's skill,
Account them implements of mischief still.
No works shall find acceptance in that day
When all disguises shall be rent away,

That square not truly with the Scripture plan,
Nor spring from love to God, or love to man.
As He ordains things sordid in their birth,
To be resolved into their parent earth,
And though the soul shall seek superior orbs,
Whate'er this world produces, it absorbs;
So self starts nothing but what tends apace
Home to the goal, where it began the race.
Such as our motive is our aim must be,
If this be servile, that can ne'er be free:
If self employ us, whatsoe'er is wrought,
We glorify that self, not Him we ought;
Such virtues had need prove their own reward,
The Judge of all men owes them no regard.
True charity, a plant divinely nursed,
Fed by the love from which it rose at first,
Thrives against hope, and in the rudest scene,
Storms but enliven its unfading green;
Exuberant is the shadow it supplies,
Its fruit on earth, its growth above the skies.
To look on Him who form'd us, and redeem'd,
So glorious now, though once so disesteem'd;
To see a God stretch forth His human hand,
To uphold the boundless scenes of His command;
To recollect that in a form like ours
He bruised beneath His feet the infernal powers,
Captivity led captive, rose to claim
The wreath He won so dearly in our name;
That throned above all height He condescends
To call the few that trust in Him His friends;
That in the heaven of heavens, that space He deems
Too scanty for the exertion of His beams,
And shines, as if impatient to bestow
Life and a kingdom upon worms below;
That sight imparts a never-dying flame,
Though feeble in degree, in kind the same.
Like him the soul, thus kindled from above,
Spreads wide her arms of universal love,
And still enlarged as she receives the grace,
Includes creation in her close embrace.
Behold a Christian!—and without the fires,
The founder of that name alone inspires,
Though all accomplishment, all knowledge meet,
To make the shining prodigy complete,
Whoever boasts that name—behold a cheat!
Were love, in these the world's last doting years,
As frequent as the want of it appears,
The churches warm'd, they would no longer hold

Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold;
Relenting forms would lose their power, or cease,
And even the dipp'd and sprinkled live in peace:
Each heart would quit its prison in the breast,
And flow in free communion with the rest.
The statesman skill'd in projects dark and deep,
Might burn his useless Machiavel,* and sleep;
His budget often fill'd, yet always poor,
Might swing at ease behind his study door,
No longer prey upon our annual rents,
Or scare the nation with its big contents:
Disbanded legions freely might depart,
And slaying man would cease to be an art.
No learnèd disputants would take the field,
Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield:
Both sides deceived, if rightly understood,
Pelting each other for the public good.
Did Charity prevail, the press would prove
A vehicle of virtue, truth, and love;
And I might spare myself the pains to snow
What few can learn, and all suppose they know.
Thus have I sought to grace a serious lay
With many a wild, indeed, but flowery spray,
In hopes to gain, what else I must have lost,
The attention pleasure has so much engross'd.
But if, unhappily deceived, I dream,
And prove too weak for so divine a theme,
Let Charity forgive me a mistake
That zeal, not vanity, has chanced to make,
And spare the poet for his subject's sake.

* An Italian writer, who published a work called "The Prince;" he inculcated in it great deceit and subtlety—hence the word "Machiavellian."





CONVERSATION.*

ARGUMENT.

In conversation much depends on culture—Indecent language and oaths reprobated—The author's dislike of the clash of arguments—The noisy wrangler—The positive pronounce without hesitation—The point of honour condemned—Duelling with fists instead of weapons proposed—Effect of long tales—The retailer of prodigies and lies—Qualities of a judicious tale—Smoking condemned—The emphatic speaker—The perfumed beau —The grave coxcomb—Sickness made a topic of conversation—Picture of a fretful temper—The bashful speaker—An English company—The Sportsman—Influence of fashion on conversation—Converse of the two disciples going to Emmaus—Delights of religious conversation—Age mellows the speech—True piety often branded as fanatic frenzy—Pleasure of communion with the good —Conversation should be unconstrained—Persons who make the Bible their companion charged with hypocrisy by the world—The charge repelled—The poet sarcastically surmises that his censure of the world may proceed from ignorance of its reformed manners—An apology for digression—Religion purifies and enriches conversation.

> Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus austri,
> Nec percussa juvant fluctû tam litora, nec quæ
> Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles.
>
> VIRG., *Ecl.* v.

THOUGH Nature weigh our talents, and dispense
To every man his modicum of sense,
And Conversation in its better part
May be esteem'd a gift, and not an art,
Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,
On culture, and the sowing of the soil.
Words learn'd by rote, a parrot may rehearse,
But talking is not always to converse;
Not more distinct from harmony divine
The constant creaking of a country sign.
As alphabets in ivory employ
Hour after hour the yet unletter'd boy,
Sorting and puzzling with a deal of glee
Those seeds of science call'd his A B C;
So language in the mouths of the adult,
(Witness its insignificant result,)

* "My design," says Cowper, referring to this poem, "is to convince the world that they make but an indifferent use of their tongues, considering the intention of Providence when He endued them with the faculty of speech."

Too often proves an implement of play,
A toy to sport with and pass time away.
Collect at evening what the day brought forth,
Compress the sum into its solid worth,
And if it weigh the importance of a fly,
The scales are false, or algebra a lie.
Sacred interpreter of human thought,
How few respect or use thee as they ought!
But all shall give account of every wrong,
Who dare dishonour or defile the tongue,
Who prostitute it in the cause of vice,
Or sell their glory at a market-price;
Who vote for hire, or point it with lampoon,
The dear-bought placeman, and the cheap buffoon.
There is a prurience in the speech of some,
Wrath stays him, or else God would strike them dumb:
His wise forbearance has their end in view,
They fill their measure and receive their due.
The heathen lawgivers of ancient days,
Names almost worthy of a Christian's praise,
Would drive them forth from the resort of men,
And shut up every satyr in his den.
Oh come not ye near innocence and truth,
Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth!
Infectious as impure, your blighting power
Taints in its rudiments the promised flower,
Its odour perish'd and its charming hue,
Thenceforth 'tis hateful, for it smells of you.
Not even the vigorous and headlong rage
Of adolescence or a firmer age,
Affords a plea allowable or just
For making speech the pamperer of lust;
But when the breath of age commits the fault,
'Tis nauseous as the vapour of a vault.
So wither'd stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,
No longer fruitful and no longer green;
The sapless wood, divested of the bark,
Grows fungous, and takes fire at every spark.
  Oaths terminate, as Paul observes, all strife,
Some men have surely then a peaceful life!
Whatever subject occupy discourse,
The feats of Vestris,* or the naval force,
Asseveration blustering in your face
Makes contradiction such a hopeless case:

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* Vestris was a famous dancer. The Vestrises continued on the stage as ballet-dancers or singers for much more than a century. The one here alluded to was the second famous dancer of that name. The first was called "Le Dieu de la Danse."

In every tale they tell, or false or true,
Well known, or such as no man ever knew,
They fix attention, heedless of your pain,
With oaths like rivets forced into the brain;
And even when sober truth prevails throughout,
They swear it, till affirmance breeds a doubt.
A Persian, humble servant of the sun,
Who, though devout, yet bigotry had none,
Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,
With adjurations every word impress,
Supposed the man a bishop, or at least,
God's name so much upon his lips, a priest;
Bow'd at the close with all his graceful airs,
And begg'd an interest in his frequent prayers.
Go, quit the rank to which ye stood preferr'd,
Henceforth associate in one common herd;
Religion, virtue, reason, common sense,
Pronounce your human form a false pretence,—
A mere disguise in which a devil lurks,
Who yet betrays his secret by his works.
Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,
And make colloquial happiness your care,
Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,—
A duel in the form of a debate.
The clash of arguments and jar of words,
Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,
Decide no question with their tedious length,
For opposition gives opinion strength,
Divert the champions prodigal of breath,
And put the peaceably disposed to death.
Oh thwart me not, Sir Soph, at every turn,
Nor carp at every flaw you may discern;
Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
I am not surely always in the wrong;
'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
A fool must now and then be right by chance.
Not that all freedom of dissent I blame;
No—there I grant the privilege I claim.
A disputable point is no man's ground;
Rove where you please, 'tis common all around.
Discourse may want an animated—No,
To brush the surface and to make it flow;
But still remember, if you mean to please,
To press your point with modesty and ease.
The mark at which my juster aim I take,
Is contradiction for its own dear sake;
Set your opinion at whatever pitch,
Knots and impediments make something hitch:

Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,
Your thread of argument is snapp'd again;
The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
Will judge himself deceived,—and prove it too.
Vociferated logic kills me quite,—
A noisy man is always in the right;
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,
And when I hope his blunders are all out,
Reply discreetly—"To be sure, no doubt!"
Dubius is such a scrupulous good man—
Yes, you may catch him tripping—if you can.
He would not with a peremptory tone
Assert the nose upon his face his own;
With hesitation admirably slow,
He humbly hopes—presumes—it may be so.
His evidence, if he were call'd by law
To swear to some enormity he saw,
For want of prominence and just relief,
Would hang an honest man and save a thief.
Through constant dread of giving truth offence,
He ties up all his hearers in suspense;
Knows what he knows as if he knew it not;
What he remembers seems to have forgot;
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,
Centering at last in having none at all.
Yet though he tease and balk your listening ear,
He makes one useful point exceeding clear;
Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme
A sceptic in philosophy may seem,
Reduced to practice, his beloved rule
Would only prove him a consummate fool.
Useless in him alike both brain and speech,
Fate having placed all truth above his reach;
His ambiguities his total sum,
He might as well be blind, and deaf, and dumb.
Where men of judgment creep and feel their way,
The positive pronounce without dismay,
Their want of light and intellect supplied
By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride;
Without the means of knowing right from wrong,
They always are decisive, clear, and strong;
Where others toil with philosophic force,
Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course,
Flings at your head conviction in the lump,
And gains remote conclusions at a jump;
Their own defect, invisible to them,
Seen in another they at once condemn;

And though self-idolised in every case,
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face:
The cause is plain, and not to be denied,
The proud are always most provoked by pride;
Few competitions but engender spite,
And those the most where neither has a right.
The Point of Honour has been deem'd of use,
To teach good manners and to curb abuse:
Admit it true, the consequence is clear,
Our polish'd manners are a mask we wear,
And at the bottom barbarous still and rude,
We are restrain'd indeed, but not subdued.
The very remedy, however sure,
Springs from the mischief it intends to cure,
And savage in its principle appears,
Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.
'Tis hard, indeed, if nothing will defend
Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end;
That now and then a hero must decease,
That the surviving world may live in peace
Perhaps at last close scrutiny may show
The practice dastardly, and mean, and low;
That men engage in it compell'd by force,
And fear, not courage, is its proper source,
The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear
Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.
At least to trample on our Maker's laws,
And hazard life for any or no cause,
To rush into a fix'd eternal state
Out of the very flames of rage and hate,
Or send another shivering to the bar
With all the guilt of such unnatural war,
Whatever use may urge or honour plead,
On reason's verdict is a madman's deed.
Am I to set my life upon a throw
Because a bear is rude and surly? No—
A moral, sensible, and well-bred man
Will not affront me, and no other can.
Were I empower'd to regulate the lists,
They should encounter with well-loaded fists:
A Trojan combat would be something new,
Let Dares beat Entellus* black and blue,
Then each might shew, to his admiring friends,
In honourable bumps his rich amends,

* Dares was a Trojan and Entellus a Sicilian, both famous athletæ, whose contest is described in the Æneid, B. v. 362-472.

And carry in contusions of his skull,
A satisfactory receipt in full.
A story in which native humour reigns
Is often useful, always entertains;
A graver fact, enlisted on your side,
May furnish illustration, well applied;
But sedentary weavers of long tales
Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.
'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,
To hear them tell of parentage and birth,
And echo conversations, dull and dry,
Embellish'd with—He said,—and, So said I.
At every interview their route the same,
The repetition makes attention lame:
We bustle up with unsuccessful speed,
And in the saddest part cry—"Droll indeed!"
The path of narrative with care pursue,
Still making probability your clue;
On all the vestiges of truth attend,
And let *them* guide you to a decent end.
Of all ambitions man may entertain,
The worst that can invade a sickly brain
Is that which angles hourly for surprise,
And baits its hook with prodigies and lies.
Credulous infancy, or age as weak,
Are fittest auditors for such to seek,
Who to please others will themselves disgrace,
Yet please not, but affront you to your face.
A great retailer of this curious ware,
Having unloaded, and made many stare,
"Can this be true?" an arch observer cries;
"Yes," (rather moved,) "I saw it with these eyes."
"Sir! I believe it on that ground alone;
I could not, had I seen it with my own."
A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct;
The language plain, and incidents well link'd.
Tell not as new what everybody knows,
And, new or old, still hasten to a close;
There centering in a focus, round and neat,
Let all your rays of information meet.
What neither yields us profit nor delight,
Is like a nurse's lullaby at night:
Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,
Or giant-killing Jack would please me more.
The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,
Makes half a sentence at a time enough;
The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain,
Then pause, and puff—and speak, and pause again.

Such often, like the tube they so admire,
Important triflers! have more smoke than fire.
Pernicious weed! whose scent the fair annoys,
Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
Thy worst effect is banishing for hours
The sex whose presence civilises ours;
Thou art indeed the drug a gardener wants
To poison vermin that infests his plants;
But are we so to wit and beauty blind
As to despise the glory of our kind,
And shew the softest minds and fairest forms
As little mercy as the grubs and worms?
They dare not wait the riotous abuse
Thy thirst-creating steams at length produce,
When wine has given indecent language birth,
And forced the floodgates of licentious mirth;
For sea-born Venus her attachment shows
Still to that element from which she rose,
And with a quiet which no fumes disturb,
Sips meek infusions of a milder herb.
The emphatic speaker dearly loves to oppose,
In contact inconvenient, nose to nose,
As if the gnomon on his neighbour's phiz,
Touch'd with the magnet, had attracted his.
His whisper'd theme, dilated and at large,
Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge,—
An extract of his diary,—no more,—
A tasteless journal of the day before.
He walk'd abroad, o'ertaken in the rain,
Call'd on a friend, drank tea, stepp'd home again,
Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk
With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.
I interrupt him with a sudden bow,
"Adieu, dear Sir! lest you should lose it now."
I cannot talk with civet in the room,
A fine puss gentleman that's all perfume;
The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—
Who thrusts his nose into a raree-show?
His odoriferous attempts to please
Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees;
But we that make no honey though we sting,
Poets, are sometimes apt to maul the thing.
'Tis wrong to bring into a mix'd resort,
What makes some sick, and others *à la mort*,
An argument of cogence, we may say,
Why such a one should keep himself away.
A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see
Quite as absurd, though not so light as he:

A shallow brain behind a serious mask,
An oracle within an empty cask,
The solemn fop; significant and budge;
A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge,
He says but little, and that little said
Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.
His wit invites you by his looks to come,
But when you knock it never is at home:
'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,
Some handsome present, as your hopes presage,
'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove
An absent friend's fidelity and love;
But when unpack'd your disappointment groans
To find it stuff'd with brickbats, earth, and stones.
  Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
In making known how oft they have been sick,
And give us, in recitals of disease,
A doctor's trouble, but without the fees;
Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,
How an emetic or cathartic sped;
Nothing is slightly touch'd, much less forgot,
Nose, ears, and eyes seem present on the spot.
Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,
Victorious seem'd, and now the doctor's skill;
And now—alas, for unforeseen mishaps!
They put on a damp nightcap and relapse;
They thought they must have died, they were so bad;
Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.
  Some fretful tempers wince at every touch,
You always do too little or too much:
You speak with life in hopes to entertain,
Your elevated voice goes through the brain;
You fall at once into a lower key,
That's worse—the drone-pipe of an humble bee.
The southern sash admits too strong a light,
You rise and drop the curtain—now 'tis night.
He shakes with cold—you stir the fire and strive
To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive.
Serve him with venison, and he chooses fish;
With sole—that's just the sort he would not wish.
He takes what he at first profess'd to loathe,
And in due time feeds heartily on both;
Yet still o'erclouded with a constant frown,
He does not swallow, but he gulps it down.
Your hope to please him vain on every plan,
Himself should work that wonder, if he can—
Alas! his efforts double his distress,
He likes yours little, and his own still less,

Thus always teasing others, always teased,
His only pleasure is—to be displeased.
I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,
And bear the marks upon a blushing face
Of needless shame, and self-imposed disgrace.
Our sensibilities are so acute,
The fear of being silent makes us mute.
We sometimes think we could a speech produce
Much to the purpose if our tongues were loose,
But, being tried, it dies upon the lip,
Faint as a chicken's note that has the pip:
Our wasted oil unprofitably burns,
Like hidden lamps in old sepulchral urns.*
Few Frenchmen of this evil have complain'd;
It seems as if we Britons were ordain'd,
By way of wholesome curb upon our pride,
To fear each other, fearing none beside.
The cause perhaps inquiry may descry,
Self-searching with an introverted eye,
Conceal'd within an unsuspected part,
The vainest corner of our own vain heart:
For ever aiming at the world's esteem,
Our self-importance ruins its own scheme;
In other eyes our talents rarely shown,
Become at length so splendid in our own,
We dare not risk them into public view,
Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.
True modesty is a discerning grace,
And only blushes in the proper place;
But counterfeit is blind, and skulks through fear,
Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed to appear:
Humility the parent of the first,
The last by Vanity produced and nursed.
The circle form'd, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate;
Yes, ma'am, and No, ma'am, utter'd softly, show
Every five minutes how the minutes go;
Each individual, suffering a constraint
Poetry may, but colours cannot, paint,
As if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry,
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection and well-timed discourse.

* It was once supposed that the ancients had the secret of keeping sepulchral lamps constantly burning.

We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,
Like conservators of the public health,
Of epidemic throats, if such there are,
Of coughs and rheums, and phthisic and catarrh.
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
Fill'd up at last with interesting news,
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hang'd, and who is brought to bed:
But fear to call a more important cause,
As if 'twere treason against English laws.
The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation, home,
And there resume an unembarrass'd brow,
Recovering what we lost we know not how,
The faculties that seem'd reduced to nought,
Expression and the privilege of thought.
The reeking, roaring hero of the chase,
I give him over as a desperate case.
Physicians write in hope to work a cure,
Never, if honest ones, when death is sure;
And though the fox he follows may be tamed,
A mere fox-follower never is reclaim'd.
Some farrier should prescribe his proper course,
Whose only fit companion is his horse,
Or if, deserving of a better doom,
The noble beast judge otherwise, his groom.
Yet even the rogue that serves him, though he stand
To take his honour's orders cap in hand,
Prefers his fellow-grooms, with much good sense,
Their skill a truth, his master's a pretence.
If neither horse nor groom affect the squire,
Where can at last his jockeyship retire?
Oh, to the club, the scene of savage joys,
The school of coarse good-fellowship and noise;
There, in the sweet society of those
Whose friendship from his boyish years he chose,
Let him improve his talent if he can,
Till none but beasts acknowledge him a man.
Man's heart had been impenetrably seal'd,
Like theirs that cleave the flood or graze the field,
Had not his Maker's all-bestowing hand
Given him a soul, and bade him understand.
The reasoning power vouchsafed, of course inferr'd
The power to clothe that reason with his word;
For all is perfect that God works on earth,
And He that gives conception aids the birth.
If this be plain, 'tis plainly understood
What uses of His boon the Giver would.

The mind despatch'd upon her busy toil,
Should range where Providence has bless'd the soil;
Visiting every flower with labour meet,
And gathering all her treasures sweet by sweet,
She should imbue the tongue with what she sips,
And shed the balmy blessing on the lips,
That good diffused may more abundant grow,
And speech may praise the power that bids it flow.
Will the sweet warbler of the livelong night,
That fills the listening lover with delight,
Forget his harmony, with rapture heard,
To learn the twittering of a meaner bird?
Or make the parrot's mimicry his choice,
That odious libel on a human voice?
No—Nature, unsophisticate by man,
Starts not aside from her Creator's plan;
The melody that was at first design'd
To cheer the rude forefathers of mankind,
Is note for note deliver'd in our ears,
In the last scene of her six thousand years:
Yet Fashion, leader of a chattering train,
Whom man for his own hurt permits to reign,
Who shifts and changes all things but his shape,
And would degrade her votary to an ape,
The fruitful parent of abuse and wrong,
Holds a usurp'd dominion o'er his tongue;
There sits and prompts him with his own disgrace,
Prescribes the theme, the tone, and the grimace,
And, when accomplish'd in her wayward school,
Calls gentleman whom she has made a fool.
'Tis an unalterable fix'd decree,
That none could frame or ratify but she,
That heaven and hell, and righteousness and sin,
Snares in his path, and foes that lurk within,
God and His attributes, (a field of day
Where 'tis an angel's happiness to stray,)
Fruits of His love, and wonders of His might,
Be never named in ears esteem'd polite;
That he who dares, when she forbids, be grave,
Shall stand proscribed a madman or a knave,
A close designer not to be believed,
Or, if excused that charge, at least deceived.
Oh folly worthy of the nurse's lap,
Give it the breast, or stop its mouth with pap!
Is it incredible, or can it seem
A dream to any except those that dream,
That man should love his Maker, and that fire,
Warming his heart, should at his lips transpire?

Know then, and modestly let fall your eyes,
And veil your daring crest that braves the skies,
That air of insolence affronts your God,
You need His pardon, and provoke His rod;
Now, in a posture that becomes you more
Than that heroic strut assumed before,
Know, your arrears with every hour accrue
For mercy shewn, while wrath is justly due.
The time is short, and there are souls on earth,
Though future pain may serve for present mirth,
Acquainted with the woes that fear or shame,
By fashion taught, forbade them once to name,
And having felt the pangs you deem a jest,
Have proved them truths too big to be express'd.
Go seek on revelation's hallow'd ground,
Sure to succeed, the remedy they found;
Touch'd by that power that you have dared to mock,
That makes seas stable, and dissolves the rock,
Your heart shall yield a life-renewing stream,
That fools, as you have done, shall call a dream.
   It happen'd on a solemn eventide,*
Soon after He that was our surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
Sought their own village,† busied as they went
In musings worthy of the great event:
They spake of Him they loved, of Him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurr'd perpetual strife,
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
The recollection, like a vein of ore,
The farther traced, enrich'd them still the more;
They thought Him, and they justly thought Him, one
Sent to do more than He appear'd to have done;
To exalt a people, and to place them high
Above all else, and wonder'd He should die.
Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
A stranger join'd them, courteous as a friend,
And ask'd them, with a kind engaging air,
What their affliction was, and begg'd a share.
Inform'd, He gather'd up the broken thread,
And, truth and wisdom gracing all He said,
Explain'd, illustrated, and search'd so well
The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,

* The evening of the Resurrection. St. Luke xxiv. 13 to 33.
† Emmaus.

That, reaching home, "The night," they said, "is near,
We must not now be parted, sojourn here."—
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And made so welcome at their simple feast,
He bless'd the bread, but vanish'd at the word,
And left them both exclaiming, "'Twas the Lord!
Did not our hearts feel all He deign'd to say,
Did they not burn within us by the way?"

Now theirs was converse such as it behoves
Man to maintain, and such as God approves:
Their views indeed were indistinct and dim,
But yet successful, being aim'd at Him.
Christ and His character their only scope,
Their object, and their subject, and their hope,
They felt what it became them much to feel,
And, wanting Him to loose the sacred seal,
Found Him as prompt, as their desire was true,
To spread the new-born glories in their view.
Well—what are ages and the lapse of time
Match'd against truths as lasting as sublime?
Can length of years on God himself exact,
Or make that fiction which was once a fact?
No—marble and recording brass decay,
And, like the graver's memory, pass away;
The works of man inherit, as is just,
Their author's frailty, and return to dust;
But truth divine for ever stands secure,
Its head is guarded as its base is sure;
Fix'd in the rolling flood of endless years
The pillar of the eternal plan appears,
The raving storm and dashing wave defies,
Built by that Architect who built the skies.
Hearts may be found that harbour at this hour
That love of Christ in all its quickening power;
And lips unstain'd by folly or by strife,
Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life,
Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows
A Jordan for the ablution of our woes.
O days of heaven and nights of equal praise,
Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days,
When souls drawn upwards in communion sweet
Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat,
Discourse as if released and safe at home,
Of dangers past and wonders yet to come,
And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
Upon the lap of covenanted rest.

What, always dreaming over heavenly things,
Like angel heads in stone with pigeon-wings?

Canting and whining out all day the word,
And half the night? fanatic and absurd!
Mine be the friend less frequent in his prayers,
Who makes no bustle with his soul's affairs,
Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,
And chase the splenetic dull hours away,
Content on earth in earthly things to shine,
Who waits for heaven ere he becomes divine,
Leaves saints to enjoy those altitudes they teach,
And plucks the fruit placed more within his reach.
Well spoken, advocate of sin and shame,
Known by thy bleating, Ignorance thy name.
Is sparkling wit the world's exclusive right?
The fix'd fee simple of the vain and light?
Can hopes of heaven, bright prospects of an hour
That comes to waft us out of sorrow's power,
Obscure or quench a faculty that finds
Its happiest soil in the serenest minds?
Religion curbs indeed its wanton play,
And brings the trifler under rigorous sway,
But gives it usefulness unknown before,
And purifying, makes it shine the more.
A Christian's wit is inoffensive light,
A beam that aids but never grieves the sight
Vigorous in age as in the flush of youth,
'Tis always active on the side of truth;
Temperance and peace insure its healthful state,
And make it brightest at its latest date.
Oh I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain,
Ere life go down, to see such sights again)
A veteran warrior in the Christian field,
Who never saw the sword he could not wield;
Grave without dulness, learnèd without pride,
Exact, yet not precise, though meek, keen-eyed;
A man that would have foil'd at their own play
A dozen would-bes of the modern day;
Who, when occasion justified its use,
Had wit as bright as ready to produce,
Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
Or from philosophy's enlighten'd page,
His rich materials, and regale your ear
With strains it was a privilege to hear;
Yet above all his luxury supreme,
And his chief glory was the gospel theme;
There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,
His happy eloquence seem'd there at home,
Ambitious not to shine or to excel,
But to treat justly what he loved so well.

It moves me more perhaps than folly ought,
When some green heads as void of wit as thought,
Suppose themselves monopolists of sense,
And wiser men's ability pretence.
Though time will wear us, and we must grow old,
Such men are not forgot as soon as cold,
Their fragrant memory will outlast their tomb,
Embalm'd for ever in its own perfume.
And to say truth, though in its early prime,
And when unstain'd with any grosser crime,
Youth has a sprightliness and fire to boast,
That in the valley of decline are lost,
And virtue with peculiar charms appears,
Crown'd with the garland of life's blooming years;
Yet age, by long experience well inform'd,
Well read, well temper'd, with religion warm'd,
That fire abated which impels rash youth,
Proud of his speed, to overshoot the truth,
As time improves the grape's authentic juice,
Mellows and makes the speech more fit for use,
And claims a reverence in its shortening day,
That 'tis an honour and a joy to pay.
The fruits of age, less fair, are yet more sound
Than those a brighter season pours around,
And, like the stores autumnal suns mature,
Through wintry rigours unimpair'd endure.
What is fanatic frenzy, scorn'd so much,
And dreaded more than a contagious touch?
I grant it dangerous, and approve your fear;
That fire is catching if you draw too near;
But sage observers oft mistake the flame,
And give true piety that odious name.
To tremble (as the creature of an hour
Ought at the view of an Almighty power)
Before His presence, at whose awful throne
All tremble in all worlds, except our own;
To supplicate His mercy, love His ways,
And prize them above pleasure, wealth, or praise,
Though common sense, allow'd a casting voice,
And free from bias, must approve the choice,
Convicts a man fanatic in the extreme,
And wild as madness in the world's esteem.
But that disease, when soberly defined,
Is the false fire of an o'erheated mind;
It views the truth with a distorted eye,
And either warps or lays it useless by;
'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant, and draws
Its sordid nourishment from man's applause,

And, while at heart sin unrelinquish'd lies,
Presumes itself chief favourite of the skies.
'Tis such a light as putrefaction breeds
In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feeds,
Shines in the dark, but usher'd into day,
The stench remains, the lustre dies away.
True bliss, if man may reach it, is composed
Of hearts in union mutually disclosed;
And, farewell else all hope of pure delight,
Those hearts should be reclaim'd, renew'd, upright.
Bad men, profaning friendship's hallow'd name,
Form, in its stead, a covenant of shame,
A dark confederacy against the laws
Of virtue, and religion's glorious cause:
They build each other up with dreadful skill,
As bastions set point-blank against God's will;
Enlarge and fortify the dread redoubt,
Deeply resolved to shut a Saviour out;
Call legions up from hell to back the deed,
And, cursed with conquest, finally succeed.
But souls that carry on a bless'd exchange
Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,
And with a fearless confidence make known
The sorrows sympathy esteems its own,
Daily derive increasing light and force
From such communion in their pleasant course,
Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,
Meet their opposers with united strength,
And one in heart, in interest, and design,
Gird up each other to the race divine.
But Conversation, choose what theme we may,
And chiefly when religion leads the way,
Should flow like waters after summer showers,
Not as if raised by mere mechanic powers.
The Christian in whose soul, though now distress'd,
Lives the dear thought of joys he once possess'd,
When all his glowing language issued forth
With God's deep stamp upon its current worth,
Will speak without disguise, and must impart,
Sad as it is, his undissembling heart,
Abhors constraint, and dares not feign a zeal,
Or seem to boast a fire he does not feel.
The song of Sion is a tasteless thing,
Unless, when rising on a joyful wing,
The soul can mix with the celestial bands,
And give the strain the compass it demands.
Strange tidings these to tell a world, who treat
All but their own experience as deceit!

Will they believe, though credulous enough
To swallow much upon much weaker proof,
That there are bless'd inhabitants of earth,
Partakers of a new ethereal birth,
Their hopes, desires, and purposes estranged
From things terrestrial, and divinely changed,
Their very language of a kind that speaks
The soul's sure interest in the good she seeks,
Who deal with Scripture, its importance felt,
As Tully with philosophy once dealt,
And in the silent watches of the night,
And through the scenes of toil-renewing light,
The social walk, or solitary ride,
Keep still the dear companion at their side?
No—shame upon a self-disgracing age,
God's work may serve an ape upon a stage
With such a jest as fill'd with hellish glee
Certain invisibles as shrewd as he;
But veneration or respect finds none,
Save from the subjects of that work alone.
The World grown old her deep discernment shows,
Claps spectacles on her sagacious nose,
Peruses closely the true Christian's face,
And finds it a mere mask of sly grimace,
Usurps God's office, lays his bosom bare,
And finds hypocrisy close lurking there,
And serving God herself through mere constraint,
Concludes his unfeign'd love of Him a feint.
And yet, God knows, look human nature through,
(And in due time the world shall know it too,)
That since the flowers of Eden felt the blast,
That after man's defection laid all waste,
Sincerity towards the heart-searching God
Has made the new-born creature her abode,
Nor shall be found in unregenerate souls,
Till the last fire burn all between the poles.
Sincerity! why 'tis his only pride,
Weak and imperfect in all grace beside,
He knows that God demands his heart entire,
And gives him all His just demands require.
Without it, his pretensions were as vain
As, having it, he deems the world's disdain;
That great defect would cost him not alone
Man's favourable judgment, but his own,
His birthright shaken, and no longer clear
Than while his conduct proves his heart sincere.
Retort the charge, and let the World be told
She boasts a confidence she does not hold;

That, conscious of her crimes, she feels instead
A cold misgiving and a killing dread:
That while in health, the ground of her support
Is madly to forget that life is short;
That sick, she trembles, knowing she must die,
Her hope presumption, and her faith a lie;
That while she dotes, and dreams that she believes,
She mocks her Maker, and herself deceives;
Her utmost reach, historical assent,
The doctrines warp'd to what they never meant;
The truth itself is in her head as dull
And useless as a candle in a skull,
And all her love of God a groundless claim,
A trick upon the canvas, painted flame.
Tell her again, the sneer upon her face,
And all her censures of the work of grace,
Are insincere, meant only to conceal
A dread she would not, yet is forced to feel;
That in her heart the Christian she reveres,
And while she seems to scorn him, only fears.
A poet does not work by square or line,
As smiths and joiners perfect a design;
At least we moderns, our attention less,
Beyond the example of our sires digress,
And claim a right to scamper and run wide,
Wherever chance, caprice, or fancy guide.
The world and I fortuitously met,
I owed a trifle and have paid the debt;
She did me wrong, I recompensed the deed,
And, having struck the balance, now proceed.
Perhaps, however, as some years have pass'd
Since she and I conversed together last,
And I have lived recluse in rural shades,
Which seldom a distinct report pervades,
Great changes and new manners have occurr'd,
And bless'd reforms that I have never heard,
And she may now be as discreet and wise,
As once absurd in all discerning eyes.
Sobriety perhaps may now be found
Where once intoxication press'd the ground;
The subtle and injurious may be just.
And he grown chaste that was the slave of lust;
Arts once esteem'd may be with shame dismiss'd,
Charity may relax the miser's fist,
The gamester may have cast his cards away,
Forgot to curse, and only kneel to pray.
It has indeed been told me (with what weight
How credibly, 'tis hard for me to state,)

That fables old, that seem'd for ever mute,
Revived, are hastening into fresh repute,
And gods and goddesses discarded long,
Like useless lumber or a stroller's song,
Are bringing into vogue their heathen train,
And Jupiter bids fair to rule again:
That certain feasts are instituted now,*
Where Venus hears the lover's tender vow;
That all Olympus through the country roves,
To consecrate our few remaining groves,
And Echo learns politely to repeat
The praise of names for ages obsolete;
That having proved the weakness, it should seem,
Of revelation's ineffectual beam,
To bring the passions under sober sway,
And give the moral springs their proper play,
They mean to try what may at last be done
By stout substantial gods of wood and stone,
And whether Roman rites may not produce
The virtues of old Rome for English use.
May much success attend the pious plan,
May Mercury once more embellish man,
Grace him again with long-forgotten arts,
Reclaim his taste and brighten up his parts,
Make him athletic as in days of old,
Learn'd at the bar, in the palæstra bold,
Divest the rougher sex of female airs,
And teach the softer not to copy theirs.
The change shall please, nor shall it matter ought,
Who works the wonder, if it be but wrought.
'Tis time, however, if the case stands thus,
For us plain folks and all who side with us,
To build our altar, confident and bold,
And say as stern Elijah said of old,†
"The strife now stands upon a fair award,
If Israel's Lord be God, then serve the Lord,—
If He be silent, faith is all a whim,
Then Baal is the God, and worship him!"
Digression is so much in modern use,
Thought is so rare, and fancy so profuse,
Some never seem so wide of their intent,
As when returning to the theme they meant;
As mendicants, whose business is to roam,
Make every parish but their own their home.

* Alluding to the profane orgies held at Medmenham Abbey by Sir Francis Dashwood and his fr[illegible]. See Timbs' "Century of Anecdote," p. 132.

† 1 Kings xviii. 21.

Though such continual zigzags in a book,
Such drunken reelings have an awkward look,
And I had rather creep to what is true,
Than rove and stagger with no mark in view :
Yet to consult a little seem'd no crime,
The freakish humour of the present time;
But now to gather up what seems dispersed,
And touch the subject I designed at first,
May prove, though much beside the rules of art,
Best for the public, and my wisest part.
And first let no man charge me that I mean
To clothe in sables every social scene,
And give good company a face severe,
As if they met around a father's bier;
For tell some men that, pleasure all their bent,
And laughter all their work, is life misspent,
Their wisdom bursts into this sage reply,
Then mirth is sin, and we should always cry.
To find the medium asks some share of wit,
And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit.
But though life's valley be a vale of tears,
A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,
Whose glory with a light that never fades,
Shoots between scatter'd rocks and opening shades,
And while it shews the land the soul desires,
The language of the land she seeks, inspires.
Thus touch'd, the tongue receives a sacred cure
Of all that was absurd, profane, impure;
Held within modest bounds, the tide of speech
Pursues the course that truth and nature teach,
No longer labours merely to produce
The pomp of sound, or tinkle without use:
Where'er it winds, the salutary stream,
Sprightly and fresh, enriches every theme,
While all the happy man possess'd before,
The gift of nature, or the classic store,
Is made subservient to the grand design
For which Heaven formed the faculty divine.
So, should an idiot, while at large he strays,
Find the sweet lyre on which an artist plays,
With rash and awkward force the chords he shakes,
And grins with wonder at the jar he makes;
But let the wise and well-instructed hand
Once take the shell beneath his just command,
In gentle sounds it seems as it complain'd
Of the rude injuries it late sustain'd,
Till tuned at length to some immortal song,
It sounds Jehovah's name, and pours His praise along.

RETIREMENT.

ARGUMENT.

The busy universally desirous of retirement—Important purpose for which this desire was given to man—Musing on the works of the creation, a happy employment—The service of God not incompatible, however, with a life of business—Human life; its pursuits—Various motives for seeking retirement—The poet's delight in the study of nature—The lover's fondness for retirement—The hypochondriac—Melancholy, a malady that claims most compassion, but receives the least—Sufferings of the melancholy man—The statesman's retirement—His new mode of life—Soon weary of retirement, he returns to his former pursuits—Citizens' villas—Fashion of frequenting watering-places—The ocean—The spendthrift in forced retirement—The sportsman ostler—The management of leisure a difficult task—Man will be summoned to account for the employment of life—Books and friends requisite for the man of leisure; and divine communion to fill the remaining void—Religion not adverse to innocent pleasures—The poet concludes with a reference to his own pursuits.

"studiis florens ignobilis oti."—VIRG. *Geor.*, lib. 4.

HACKNEY'D in business, wearied at that oar,
Which thousands, once fast chain'd to, quit no more,
But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,
All wish, or seem to wish, they could forego;
The statesman, lawyer, merchant, man of trade,
Pants for the refuge of some rural shade,
Where all his long anxieties forgot,
Amid the charms of a sequester'd spot,
Or recollected only to gild o'er
And add a smile to what was sweet before,
He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,
Lay his old age upon the lap of ease,
Improve the remnant of his wasted span,
And, having lived a trifler, die a man.
Thus conscience pleads her cause within the breast,
Though long rebell'd against, not yet suppress'd,
And calls a creature form'd for God alone,
For Heaven's high purposes and not his own,
Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,
From what debilitates and what inflames,
From cities humming with a restless crowd,
Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,
Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,
The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain,

Where works of man are cluster'd close around
And works of God are hardly to be found,
To regions where in spite of sin and woe,
Traces of Eden are still seen below,
Where mountain, river, forest, field, and grove
Remind him of his Maker's power and love.
'Tis well if look'd for at so late a day,
In the last scene of such a senseless play,
True wisdom will attend his feeble call,
And grace his action ere the curtain fall.
Souls that have long despised their heavenly birth,
Their wishes all impregnated with earth,
For threescore years employ'd with ceaseless care,
In catching smoke and feeding upon air;
Conversant only with the ways of men,
Rarely redeem the short remaining ten.
Inveterate habits choke the unfruitful heart,
Their fibres penetrate its tenderest part,
And draining its nutritious powers to feed
Their noxious growth, starve every better seed.
Happy if full of days—but happier far,
If ere we yet discern life's evening star,
Sick of the service of a world that feeds
Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,
We can escape from custom's idiot sway,
To serve the Sovereign we were born to obey.
Then sweet to muse upon His skill display'd
(Infinite skill) in all that He has made!
To trace in Nature's most minute design
The signature and stamp of power divine,
Contrivance intricate express'd with ease,
Where unassisted sight no beauty sees,
The shapely limb and lubricated joint,
Within the small dimensions of a point;
Muscle and nerve miraculously spun,
His mighty work who speaks and it is done,
The Invisible in things scarce seen reveal'd,
To whom an atom is an ample field;
To wonder at a thousand insect forms,
These hatch'd, and those resuscitated worms,
New life ordain'd and brighter scenes to share,
Once prone on earth, now buoyant upon air,
Whose shape would make them, had they bulk and size,
More hideous foes than fancy can devise;
With helmet-heads and dragon scales adorn'd,
The mighty myriads, now securely scorn'd,
Would mock the majesty of man's high birth,
Despise his bulwarks, and unpeople earth.

Then with a glance of fancy to survey,
Far as the faculty can stretch away,
Ten thousand rivers pour'd at His command
From urns that never fail, through every land,
These like a deluge with impetuous force,
Those winding modestly a silent course;
The cloud-surmounting Alps; the fruitful vales;
Seas, on which every nation spreads her sails;
The sun, a world whence other worlds drink light;
The crescent moon, the diadem of night;
Stars countless, each in his appointed place,
Fast anchor'd in the deep abyss of space;—
At such a sight to catch the poet's* flame,
And with a rapture like his own exclaim,
"These are Thy glorious works, thou Source of good,
How dimly seen, how faintly understood!
Thine, and upheld by Thy paternal care,
This universal frame, thus wondrous fair;
Thy power divine, and bounty beyond thought,
Adored and praised in all that Thou hast wrought,
Absorb'd in that immensity I see,
I shrink abased, and yet aspire to Thee;
Instruct me, guide me to that heavenly day,
Thy words more clearly than Thy works, display,
That while Thy truths my grosser thoughts refine,
I may resemble Thee and call Thee mine."
O blest proficiency! surpassing all
That men erroneously their glory call,
The recompence that arts or arms can yield,
The bar, the senate, or the tented field.
Compared with this sublimest life below,
Ye kings and rulers, what have courts to show?
Thus studied, used, and consecrated thus,
Whatever *is*, seems form'd indeed for us!
Not as the plaything of a froward child,
Fretful unless diverted and beguiled,
Much less to feed and fan the fatal fires
Of pride, ambition, or impure desires;
But as a scale by which the soul ascends
From mighty means to more important ends,
Securely, though by steps but rarely trod,
Mounts from inferior beings up to God,
And sees by no fallacious light or dim,
Earth made for man, and man himself for Him.
Not that I mean to approve, or would enforce,
A superstitious and monastic course:

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* Milton, in Paradise Lost.

Truth is not local; God alike pervades
And fills the world of traffic and the shades,
And may be feared amidst the busiest scenes,
Or scorn'd where business never intervenes.
But 'tis not easy with a mind like ours,
Conscious of weakness in its noblest powers,
And in a world where, other ills apart,
The roving eye misleads the careless heart,
To limit thought, by nature prone to stray
Wherever freakish fancy points the way:
To bid the pleadings of self-love be still,
Resign our own and seek our Maker's will;
To spread the page of Scripture, and compare
Our conduct with the laws engraven there;
To measure all that passes in the breast,
Faithfully, fairly, by that sacred test;
To dive into the secret deeps within,
To spare no passion and no favourite sin,
And search the themes, important above all,
Ourselves and our recovery from our fall.
But leisure, silence, and a mind released
From anxious thoughts how wealth may be increased,
How to secure in some propitious hour,
The point of interest or the post of power,
A soul serene, and equally retired
From objects too much dreaded or desired,
Safe from the clamours of perverse dispute,
At least are friendly to the great pursuit.
   Opening the map of God's extensive plan,
We find a little isle, this life of man;
Eternity's unknown expanse appears
Circling around and limiting his years;
The busy race examine and explore
Each creek and cavern of the dangerous shore,
With care collect what in their eyes excels,
Some shining pebbles, and some weeds and shells;
Thus laden, dream that they are rich and great,
And happiest he that groans beneath his weight.
The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,
And every hour sweeps multitudes away;
They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,
Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep.
A few forsake the throng, with lifted eyes
Ask wealth of Heaven, and gain a real prize,
Truth, wisdom, grace, and peace like that above,
Seal'd with His signet whom they serve and love;
Scorn'd by the rest, with patient hope they wait
A kind release from their imperfect state,

And unregretted are soon snatch'd away
From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.
Nor these alone prefer a life recluse,
Who seek retirement for its proper use;
The love of change that lives in every breast,
Genius, and temper, and desire of rest,
Discordant motives in one centre meet,
And each inclines its votary to retreat.
Some minds by nature are averse to noise,
And hate the tumult half the world enjoys,
The lure of avarice, or the pompous prize
That courts display before ambitious eyes,
The fruits that hang on pleasure's flowery stem,
Whate'er enchants them are no snares to them.
To them the deep recess of dusky groves,
Or forest where the deer securely roves,
The fall of waters and the song of birds,
And hills that echo to the distant herds,
Are luxuries excelling all the glare
The world can boast and her chief favourites share
With eager step, and carelessly array'd,
For such a cause the poet seeks the shade,
From all he sees he catches new delight,
Pleased Fancy claps her pinions at the sight;
The rising or the setting orb of day,
The clouds that flit, or slowly float away,
Nature in all the various shapes she wears,
Frowning in storms, or breathing gentle airs,
The snowy robe her wintry state assumes,
Her summer heats, her fruits, and her perfumes,
All, all alike transport the glowing bard,
Success in rhyme his glory and reward.
O Nature! whose Elysian scenes disclose
His bright perfections at whose word they rose,
Next to that Power who form'd thee and sustains,
Be thou the great inspirer of my strains.
Still as I touch the lyre, do thou expand
Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand,
That I may catch a fire but rarely known,
Give useful light though I should miss renown,
And poring on thy page, whose every line
Bears proof of an intelligence divine,
May feel a heart enrich'd by what it pays,
That builds its glory on its Maker's praise.
Woe to the man whose wit disclaims its use,
Glittering in vain, or only to seduce,
Who studies nature with a wanton eye,
Admires the work, but slips the lesson by;

His hours of leisure ana recess employs
In drawing pictures of forbidden joys,
Retires to blazon his own worthless name,
Or shoot the careless with a surer aim.
The lover too shuns business and alarms,
Tender idolater of absent charms.
Saints offer nothing in their warmest prayers,
That he devotes not with a zeal like theirs;
'Tis consecration of his heart, soul, time,
And every thought that wanders is a crime.
In sighs he worships his supremely fair,
And weeps a sad libation in despair,
Adores a creature, and devout in vain,
Wins in return an answer of disdain.
As woodbine weds the plant within her reach,
Rough elm, or smooth-grain'd ash, or glossy beech,
In spiral rings ascends the trunk, and lays
Her golden tassels on the leafy sprays,
But does a mischief while she lends a grace,
Straitening its growth by such a strict embrace,
So love, that clings around the noblest minds,
Forbids the advancement of the soul he binds;
The suitor's air indeed he soon improves,
And forms it to the taste of her he loves,
Teaches his eyes a language, and no less
Refines his speech and fashions his address;
But farewell promises of happier fruits,
Manly designs, and learning's grave pursuits,
Girt with a chain he cannot wish to break,
His only bliss is sorrow for her sake;
Who will may pant for glory and excel,
Her smile his aim, all higher aims farewell!
Thyrsis, Alexis, or whatever name
May least offend against so pure a flame,
Though sage advice of friends the most sincere
Sounds harshly in so delicate an ear,
And lovers, of all creatures, tame or wild,
Can least brook management, however mild,
Yet let a poet (poetry disarms
The fiercest animals with magic charms)
Risk an intrusion on thy pensive mood,
And woo and win thee to thy proper good.
Pastoral images and still retreats,
Umbrageous walks and solitary seats,
Sweet birds in concert with harmonious streams,
Soft airs, nocturnal vigils, and day-dreams,
Are all enchantments in a case like thine,
Conspire against thy peace with one design.

Soothe thee to make thee but a surer prey,
And feed the fire that wastes thy powers away.
Up—God has form'd thee with a wiser view,
Not to be led in chains, but to subdue;
Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first
Points out a conflict with thyself, the worst.
Woman indeed, a gift He would bestow
When He design'd a Paradise below,
The richest earthly boon His hands afford,
Deserves to be beloved, but not adored.
Post away swiftly to more active scenes,
Collect the scatter'd truths that study gleans,
Mix with the world, but with its wiser part,
No longer give an image all thine heart;
Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine,
'Tis God's just claim, prerogative divine.
Virtuous and faithful HEBERDEN,* whose skill
Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil,
Gives melancholy up to nature's care,
And sends the patient into purer air.
Look where he comes—in this embower'd alcove,
Stand close conceal'd, and see a statue move:
Lips busy, and eyes fix'd, foot falling slow,
Arms hanging idly down, hands clasp'd below,
Interpret to the marking eye distress,
Such as its symptoms can alone express.
That tongue is silent now,—that silent tongue
Could argue once, could jest, or join the song,
Could give advice, could censure or commend,
Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.
Renounced alike its office and its sport,
Its brisker and its graver strains fall short;
Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,
And like a summer brook are pass'd away.
This is a sight for pity to peruse
Till she resembles faintly what she views,
Till sympathy contract a kindred pain,
Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.
This of all maladies that man infest,
Claims most compassion and receives the least:
Job felt it when he groan'd beneath the rod,
And the barbed arrows of a frowning God;
And such emollients as his friends could spare,
Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.

* Dr. William Heberden, a distinguished physician, who was Cowper's medical friend. He died in 1801.

Bless'd, rather cursed, with hearts that never feel,
Kept snug in caskets of closé-hammer'd steel,
With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,
And minds that deem derided pain a treat;
With limbs of British oak, and nerves of wire,
And wit that puppet prompters might inspire,
Their sovereign nostrum is a clumsy joke
On pangs enforced with God's severest stroke.
But with a soul that ever felt the sting
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing:
Not to molest, or irritate, or raise
A laugh at his expense, is slender praise;
He that has not usurp'd the name of man
Does all, and deems too little all, he can,
To assuage the throbbings of the fester'd part,
And staunch the bleedings of a broken heart.
'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,
Forgery of fancy, and a dream of woes;
Man is a harp, whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony, disposed aright;
The screws reversed, (a task which if He please
God in a moment executes with ease,)
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
Lost, till he tune them, all their power and use.
Then neither heathy wilds, nor scenes as fair
As ever recompensed the peasant's care,
Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,
Parks in which Art preceptress Nature weds,
Nor gardens interspersed with flowery beds,
Nor gales, that catch the scent of blooming groves,
And waft it to the mourner as he roves,
Can call up life into his faded eye,
That passes all he sees unheeded by:
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,
No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals.
And thou sad sufferer under nameless ill,
That yields not to the touch of human skill,
Improve the kind occasion, understand
A Father's frown, and kiss His chastening hand.
To thee the dayspring and the blaze of noon,
The purple evening and resplendent moon,
The stars that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,
Seem drops descending in a shower of light,
Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine:
Yet seek Him, in His favour life is found,
All bliss beside, a shadow or a sound;

Then Heaven, eclipsed so long, and this dull earth,
Shall seem to start into a second birth;
Nature assuming a more lovely face,
Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,
Shall be despised and overlook'd no more,
Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before,
Impart to things inanimate a voice,
And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice;
The sound shall run along the winding vales,
And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.
"Ye groves," (the statesman at his desk exclaims,
Sick of a thousand disappointed aims,)
"My patrimonial treasure and my pride,
Beneath your shades your gray possessor hide!
Receive me languishing for that repose
The servant of the public never knows.
Ye saw me once (ah, those regretted days
When boyish innocence was all my praise!)
Hour after hour delightfully allot
To studies then familiar, since forgot,
And cultivate a taste for ancient song,
Catching its ardour as I mused along;
Nor seldom, as propitious Heaven might send,
What once I valued and could boast, a friend,
Were witnesses how cordially I press'd
His undissembling virtue to my breast;
Receive me now, not uncorrupt as then,
Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,
But versed in arts that while they seem to stay
A falling empire, hasten its decay.
To the fair haven of my native home,
The wreck of what I was, fatigued I come;
For once I can approve the patriot's voice,
And make the course he recommends my choice:
We meet at last in one sincere desire,—
His wish and mine both prompt me to retire."
'Tis done;—he steps into the welcome chaise,
Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,
That whirl away from business and debate
The disencumber'd Atlas of the state.
Ask not the boy, who, when the breeze of morn,
First shakes the glittering drops from every thorn,
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush
Sits linking cherry-stones, or platting rush,
How fair is freedom?—he was always free;
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,
To snare the mole, or with ill-fashion'd hook
To draw the incautious minnow from the brook,

Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,
His flock the chief concern he ever knew;
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,
The good we never miss we rarely prize.
But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,
Escaped from office and its constant cares,
What charms he sees in Freedom's smile express'd,
In freedom lost so long, now repossess'd;
The tongue whose strains were cogent as commands,
Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,
Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,
Or plead its silence as its best applause.
He knows indeed that whether dress'd or rude,
Wild without art, or artfully subdued,
Nature in every form inspires delight,
But never mark'd her with so just a sight.
Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er,
Green balks and furrow'd lands, the stream that spreads
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,
Downs that almost escape the inquiring eye,
That melt and fade into the distant sky,
Beauties he lately slighted as he pass'd,
Seem all created since he travell'd last.
Master of all the enjoyments he design'd,
No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,
What early philosophic hours he keeps,
How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps!
Not sounder he that on the mainmast head,
While morning kindles with a windy red,
Begins a long look-out for distant land,
Nor quits till evening watch his giddy stand,
Then swift descending with a seaman's haste,
Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.
He chooses company, but not the squire's,
Whose wit is rudeness, whose good breeding tires;
Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come,
Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home;
Nor can he much affect the neighbouring peer,
Whose toe of emulation treads too near,
But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,
With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend,—
A man whom marks of condescending grace
Teach, while they flatter him, his proper place,—
Who comes when call'd, and at a word withdraws,
Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause;
Some plain mechanic, who without pretence
To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence,

On whom he rests well pleased his weary powers,
And talks and laughs away his vacant hours.
The tide of life, swift always in its course,
May run in cities with a brisker force,
But nowhere with a current so serene,
Or half so clear as in the rural scene.
Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,
What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss!
Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,
But short the date of all we gather here;
No happiness is felt except the true,
That does not charm thee more for being new.
This observation, as it chanced, not made,
Or, if the thought occurr'd not duly weigh'd,
He sighs—for after all, by slow degrees,
The spot he loved has lost the power to please;
To cross his ambling pony day by day
Seems at the best but dreaming life away;
The prospect, such as might enchant despair,
He views it not, or sees no beauty there;
With aching heart, and discontented looks,
Returns at noon to billiards or to books,
But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,
A secret thirst of his renounced employs.
He chides the tardiness of every post,
Pants to be told of battles won or lost,
Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,
'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,
Flies to the levee, and, received with grace,
Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place.
Suburban villas, highway-side retreats,
That dread the encroachment of our growing streets,
Tight boxes neatly sash'd, and in a blaze
With all a July sun's collected rays,
Delight the citizen, who, gasping there,
Breathes clouds of dust, and calls it country air.
O sweet retirement, who would balk the thought
That could afford retirement, or could not?
'Tis such an easy walk, so smooth and straight,
The second milestone fronts the garden gate;
A step if fair, and, if a shower approach,
You find safe shelter in the next stage-coach.
There prison'd in a parlour snug and small,
Like bottled wasps upon a southern wall,
The man of business and his friends compress'd,
Forget their labours, and yet find no rest;
But still 'tis rural—trees are to be seen
From every window, and the fields are green

Ducks paddle in the pond before the door,
And what could a remoter scene show more?
A sense of elegance we rarely find
The portion of a mean or vulgar mind,
And ignorance of better things makes man,
Who cannot much, rejoice in what he can;
And he that deems his leisure well bestowed
In contemplation of a turnpike road,
Is occupied as well, employs his hours
As wisely, and as much improves his powers,
As he that slumbers in pavilions graced
With all the charms of an accomplish'd taste.
Yet hence, alas! insolvencies; and hence
The unpitied victim of ill-judged expense,
From all his wearisome engagements freed,
Shakes hands with business, and retires indeed.
Your prudent grandmammas, ye modern belles,
Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge Wells,
When health required it, would consent to roam,
Else more attach'd to pleasures found at home;
But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,
Ingenious to diversify dull life,
In coaches, chaises, caravans, ana noys,
Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys,
And all impatient of dry land agree
With one consent to rush into the sea.
Ocean exhibits, fathomless and broad,
Much of the power and majesty of God;
He swathes about the swelling of the deep,
That shines and rests as infants smile and sleep;
Vast as it is it answers as it flows,
The breathings of the lightest air that blows;
Curling and whitening over all the waste,
The rising waves obey the increasing blast,
Abrupt and horrid as the tempest roars,
Thunder and flash upon the steadfast shores,
T'll He that rides the whirlwind checks the rein,
Then all the world of waters sleeps again.
Nereids or Dryads, as the fashion leads,
Now in the floods, now panting in the meads,
Votaries of Pleasure still, where'er she dwells,
Near barren rocks, in palaces, or cells,
Oh grant a poet leave to recommend
(A poet fond of Nature, and your friend)
Her slighted works to your admiring view;
Her works must needs excel, who fashion'd you.
Would ye, when rambling in your morning ride,
With some unmeaning coxcomb at your side,

Condemn the prattler for his idle pains,
To waste unheard the music of his strains,
And, deaf to all the impertinence of tongue,
That, while it courts, affronts and does you wrong,
Mark well the finish'd plan without a fault,
The seas globose and huge, the o'erarching vault,
Earth's millions daily fed, a world employ'd
In gathering plenty yet to be enjoy'd,
Till gratitude grew vocal in the praise
Of God, beneficent in all His ways;
Graced with such wisdom how would beauty shine!
Ye want but that to seem indeed divine.

Anticipated rents and bills unpaid
Force many a shining youth into the shade,
Not to redeem his time, but his estate,
And play the fool, but at a cheaper rate.
There, hid in loathed obscurity, removed
From pleasures left, but never more beloved,
He just endures, and with a sickly spleen
Sighs o'er the beauties of the charming scene.
Nature indeed looks prettily in rhyme;
Streams tinkle sweetly in poetic chime;
The warblings of the blackbird, clear and strong,
Are musical enough in Thomson's song;
And Cobham's groves, and Windsor's green retreats,
When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets;
He likes the country, but in truth must own,
Most likes it when he studies it in town.

Poor Jack—no matter who—for when I blame,
I pity, and must therefore sink the name,—
Lived in his saddle, loved the chase, the course,
And always, ere he mounted, kiss'd his horse.
The estate his sires had own'd in ancient years,
Was quickly distanced, match'd against a peer's.
Jack vanish'd, was regretted, and forgot;
'Tis wild good nature's never failing lot.
At length, when all had long supposed him dead,
By cold submersion, razor, rope, or lead,
My lord, alighting at his usual place,
The Crown, took notice of an ostler's face.
Jack knew his friend, but hoped in that disguise
He might escape the most observing eyes,
And whistling, as if unconcern'd and gay,
Curried his nag and look'd another way.
Convinced at last, upon a nearer view,
'Twas he, the same, the very Jack he knew,
O'erwhelm'd at once with wonder, grief, and joy,
He press'd him much to quit his base employ;

His countenance, his purse, his heart, his hand,
Influence and power, were all at his command.
Peers are not always generous as well bred,
But Granby was,—meant truly what he said.
Jack bow'd, and was obliged;—confessed 'twas strange,
That so retired he should not wish a change,
But knew no medium between guzzling beer,
And his old stint—three thousand pounds a year.
  Thus some retire to nourish hopeless woe;
Some seeking happiness not found below;
Some to comply with humour, and a mind
To social scenes by nature disinclined;
Some sway'd by fashion, some by deep disgust;
Some self-impoverish'd, and because they must;
But few, that court retirement, are aware
Of half the toils they must encounter there.
  Lucrative offices are seldom lost
For want of powers proportion'd to the post:
Give e'en a dunce the employment he desires,
And he soon finds the talents it requires;
A business with an income at its heels
Furnishes always oil for its own wheels.
But in his arduous enterprise to close
His active years with indolent repose,
He finds the labours of that state exceed
His utmost faculties, severe indeed.
'Tis easy to resign a toilsome place,
But not to manage leisure with a grace;
Absence of occupation is not rest,
A mind quite vacant is a mind distress'd.
The veteran steed excused his task at length,
In kind compassion of his failing strength,
And turn'd into the park or mead to graze,
Exempt from future service all his days,
There feels a pleasure perfect in its kind,
Ranges at liberty, and snuffs the wind:
But when his lord would quit the busy road,
To taste a joy like that he has bestow'd,
He proves, less happy than his favour'd brute,
A life of ease a difficult pursuit.
Thought, to the man that never thinks, may seem
As natural as when asleep to dream;
But reveries (for human minds will act)
Specious in show, impossible in fact,
Those flimsy webs that break as soon as wrought,
Attain not to the dignity of thought:
Nor yet the swarms that occupy the brain,
Where dreams of dress, intrigue, and pleasure reign,

Nor such as useless conversation breeds,
Or lust engenders, and indulgence feeds.
Whence, and what are we? To what end ordain'd?
What means the drama by the world sustained?
Business or vain amusement, care or mirth,
Divide the frail inhabitants of earth.
Is duty a mere sport, or an employ?
Life an entrusted talent, or a toy?
Is there, as reason, conscience, Scripture say,
Cause to provide for a great future day,
When, earth's assign'd duration at an end,
Man shall be summon'd, and the dead attend?
The trumpet—will it sound? the curtain rise?
And shew the august tribunal of the skies,
Where no prevarication shall avail,
Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,
The pride of arrogant distinctions fall,
And conscience and our conduct judge us all?
Pardon me, ye that give the midnight oil
To learned cares or philosophic toil,
Though I revere your honourable names,
Your useful labours, and important aims,
And hold the world indebted to your aid,
Enrich'd with the discoveries ye have made,
Yet let me stand excused, if I esteem
A mind employ'd on so sublime a theme,
Pushing her bold inquiry to the date
And outline of the present transient state,
And after poising her adventurous wings,
Settling at last upon eternal things,
Far more intelligent, and better taught
The strenuous use of profitable thought,
Than ye when happiest, and enlighten'd most,
And highest in renown, can justly boast.
A mind unnerved, or indisposed to bear
The weight of subjects worthiest of her care,
Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,
Must change her nature, or in vain retires.
An idler is a watch that wants both hands;
As useless if it goes as when it stands.
Books therefore, not the scandal of the shelves,
In which lewd sensualists print out themselves,
Nor those in which the stage gives vice a blow,
(With what success let modern manners shew:)
Nor his who, for the bane of thousands born,
Built God a church, and laugh'd His Word to scorn,*

* Voltaire: he built a church and inscribed on the porch *Deo erexit Voltaire.*

Skilful alike to seem devout and just,
And stab religion with a sly side-thrust;
Nor those of learn'd philologists, who chase
A panting syllable through time and space,
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark;
But such as learning without false pretence,
The friend of truth, the associate of sound sense,
And such as in the zeal of good design,
Strong judgment labouring in the Scripture mine,
All such as manly and great souls produce,
Worthy to live, and of eternal use;
Behold in these what leisure hours demand,
Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.
Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,
And while she polishes, perverts the taste;
Habits of close attention, thinking heads,
Become more rare as dissipation spreads,
Till authors hear at length one general cry,
Tickle and entertain us, or we die!
The loud demand from year to year the same,
Beggars invention and makes fancy lame,
Till farce itself, most mournfully jejune,
Calls for the kind assistance of a tune,
And novels (witness every month's review)*
Belie their name, and offer nothing new.
The mind relaxing into needful sport,
Should turn to writers of an abler sort,
Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style
Give truth a lustre, and make wisdom smile.
Friends, (for I cannot stint as some have done,
Too rigid in my view, that name to one,
Though one, I grant it, in the generous breast
Will stand advanced a step above the rest;
Flowers by that name promiscuously we call,
But one, the rose, the regent of them all;)
Friends, not adopted with a schoolboy's haste,
But chosen with a nice discerning taste,
Well born, well disciplined, who, placed apart
From vulgar minds, have honour much at heart,
And, though the world may think the ingredients odd,
The love of virtue, and the fear of God!
Such friends prevent what else would soon succeed,
A temper rustic as the life we lead,
And keep the polish of the manners clean,
As theirs who bustle in the busiest scene;

* The *Monthly*, a review of that period.

For solitude, however some may rave,
Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave,
A sepulchre in which the living lie,
Where all good qualities grow sick and die.
I praise the Frenchman;* his remark was shrewd,—
"How sweet, how passing sweet is solitude!
But grant me still a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper—Solitude is sweet."
Yet neither these delights, nor aught beside
That appetite can ask, or wealth provide,
Can save us always from a tedious day,
Or shine the dulness of still life away;
Divine communion carefully enjoy'd,
Or sought with energy, must fill the void.
O sacred art! to which alone life owes
Its happiest seasons, and a peaceful close,
Scorn'd in a world indebted to that scorn
For evils daily felt and hardly borne,
Not knowing thee, we reap, with bleeding hands,
Flowers of rank odour upon thorny lands,
And while experience cautions us in vain,
Grasp seeming happiness, and find it pain.
Despondence, self-deserted in her grief,
Lost by abandoning her own relief;
Murmuring and ungrateful discontent,
That scorns afflictions mercifully meant;
Those humours tart as wines upon the fret,
Which idleness and weariness beget;
These and a thousand plagues that haunt the breast,
Fond of the phantom of an earthly rest,
Divine communion chases, as the day
Drives to their dens the obedient beasts of prey.
See Judah's promised king,† bereft of all,
Driven out an exile from the face of Saul,
To distant caves‡ the lonely wanderer flies,
To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies.
Hear the sweet accents of his tuneful voice,
Hear him, o'erwhelm'd with sorrow, yet rejoice
No womanish or wailing grief has part,
No, not a moment, in his royal heart;
'Tis manly music, such as martyrs make,
Suffering with gladness for a Saviour's sake;
His soul exults, hope animates his lays,
The sense of mercy kindles into praise,
And wilds familiar with a lion's roar,
Ring with ecstatic sounds unheard before.

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* La Bruyère. † David. ‡ 1 Sam. xxii. 1; xxiv. 3.

'Tis love like his that can alone defeat
The foes of man, or make a desert sweet.
  Religion does not censure or exclude
Unnumber'd pleasures harmlessly pursued.
To study culture, and with artful toil
To meliorate and tame the stubborn soil;
To give dissimilar yet fruitful lands
The grain, or herb, or plant that each demands;
To cherish virtue in an humble state,
And share the joys your bounty may create;
To mark the matchless workings of the power
That shuts within its seed the future flower,
Bids these in elegance of form excel,
In colour these, and those delight the smell,
Sends Nature forth, the daughter of the skies,
To dance on earth, and charm all human eyes;
To teach the canvas innocent deceit,
Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet;
These, these are arts pursued without a crime,
That leave no stain upon the wing of time.
  Me poetry (or, rather notes that aim
Feebly and vainly at poetic fame)
Employs, shut out from more important views,
Fast by the banks of the slow-winding Ouse;
Content if, thus sequester'd, I may raise
A monitor's, though not a poet's praise,
And while I teach an art too little known,
To close life wisely, may not waste my own.



THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN.

SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME SAFE HOME AGAIN.

1782.

The story of John Gilpin's ride was related to Cowper by his friend, Lady Austen, who had heard it as a child. It caused the poet a sleepless night, we are told, as he was kept awake by laughter at it. During these restless hours he turned it into the famous ballad. It appeared in the *Public Advertiser*, November 14th, 1782, anonymously.

A celebrated actor named Henderson took it for one of his public recitations at Freemasons' Hall. It became immediately so popular that it was printed everywhere—in newspapers, magazines, and separately. It was even sung as a common ballad in the streets. It has preserved its popularity to the present date.

The original John Gilpin was, it is said, a Mr. Beyer, a linendraper, who lived at the Cheapside corner of Paternoster Row. He died in 1791, at the age of nearly a hundred years.

John Gilpin was a citizen
  Of credit and renown,
A trainband captain eke was he
  Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
  "Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
  No holiday have seen.

To-morrow is our wedding day,
  And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
  All in a chaise and pair.

My sister, and my sister's child,
  Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
  On horseback after we."

He soon replied,—"I do admire
  Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
  Therefore it shall be done.

I am a linendraper bold,
  As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
  Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin,—"That's well said;
  And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
  Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife;
  O'erjoyed was he to find,
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
  She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
  But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
  Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
  Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
  To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
  Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath,
  As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
  Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
  But soon came down again;

For saddletree scarce reached had he,
  His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
  Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
  Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
  Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
  Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,—
  "The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he, "yet bring it me,
  My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
  When I do exercise."

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
  Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
  And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
  Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
  To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
  Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat,
  He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
  Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
  With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
  Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
  Which galled him in his seat.

So "Fair and softly," John he cried,
  But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
  In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
  Who cannot sit upright,
He grasped the mane with both his hands,
  And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
  Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
  Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
  Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
  Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
  Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
  At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
  The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
  As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, "Well done!"
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around;
"He carries weight!" "He rides a race!"
"'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington,
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the Wash about,
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton, his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house!"
They all at once did cry;
"The dinner waits, and we are tired:"—
Said Gilpin—"So am I!"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
  Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to
  The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
  And sore against his will,
Till, at his friend the calender's,
  His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
  His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
  And thus accosted him :—

"What news? what news? your tidings tell;
  Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
  Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
  And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender,
  In merry guise, he spoke:

"I came because your horse would come;
  And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,—
  They are upon the road."

The calender, right glad to find
  His friend in merry pin,
Returned him not a single word,
  But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
  A wig that flowed behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
  Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn,
  Thus showed his ready wit:
"My head is twice as big as yours,
  They therefore needs must fit.

But let me scrape the dirt away
  That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
  Be in a hungry case."

Said John,—"It is my wedding day,
  And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
  And I should dine at Ware."

So turning to his horse, he said,
  "I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
  You shall go back for mine."

Ah! luckless speech, and bootless boast,
  For which he paid full dear;
For while he spake, a braying ass
  Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
  Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
  As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went Gilpin's hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first,
  For why?—they were too big.

Now mistress Gilpin, when she saw
  Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
  She pulled out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
  That drove them to the Bell,
"This shall be yours, when you bring back
  My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
  John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop
  By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant,
  And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
  And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
  The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
  Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
  They raised the hue and cry:—

"Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!"
  Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
  Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike-gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town;
Nor stopped till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing long live the King,
And Gilpin, long live he;
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!



THE TASK.

IN SIX BOOKS.

1785.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The history of the following production is briefly this: A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the Author, and gave him the SOFA for a subject. He obeyed; and, having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and, pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a Volume.

In the poem on the subject of Education, he would be very sorry to stand suspected of having aimed his censure at any particular school. His objections are such as naturally apply themselves to schools in general. If there were not, as for the most part there is, wilful neglect in those who manage them, and an omission even of such discipline as they are susceptible of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention; and the aching hearts of ten thousand parents, mourning under the bitterest of all disappointments, attest the truth of the allegation. His quarrel, therefore, is with the mischief at large, and not with any particular instance of it.

BOOK I.—THE SOFA.

ARGUMENT.

Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the sofa—A schoolboy's ramble—A walk in the country—The scene described—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful—Another walk—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected—Colonnades commenced—Alcove, and the view from it—The wilderness—The grove—The thresher—The necessity and the benefits of exercise—The works of nature superior to, and in some instances inimitable by, art—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure—Change of scene sometimes expedient—A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced—Gipsies—The blessings of civilized life—That state most favourable to virtue—The South Sea Islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai—His present state of mind supposed—Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured—Fête champêtre—The book concludes with a reflection on the effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

I SING the Sofa. I who lately sang
Truth, Hope, and Charity, and touch'd with awe
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,
Escaped with pain from that adventurous flight,
Now seek repose upon an humbler theme;

The theme though humble, yet august and proud
The occasion—for the Fair* commands the song.
  Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for use,
Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.
As yet black breeches were not; satin smooth,
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile:
The hardy chief upon the rugged rock
Wash'd by the sea, or on the gravelly bank
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,
Fearless of wrong, reposed his weary strength.
Those barbarous ages past, succeeded next
The birthday of Invention, weak at first,
Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.
Joint-stools were then created; on three legs
Upborne they stood:—three legs upholding firm
A massy slab, in fashion square or round.
On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,
And sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms;
And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
May still be seen, but perforated sore
And drill'd in holes the solid oak is found,
By worms voracious eating through and through.
  At length a generation more refined
Improved the simple plan; made three legs four,
Gave them a twisted form vermicular,
And o'er the seat with plenteous wadding stuff'd
Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,
Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought
And woven close, or needlework sublime.
There might ye see the piony spread wide,
The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
Lap-dog and lambkin with black staring eyes,
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.
  Now came the cane from India, smooth and bright
With Nature's varnish, sever'd into stripes
That interlaced each other, these supplied
Of texture firm a lattice-work, that braced
The new machine, and it became a chair.
But restless was the chair; the back erect
Distress'd the weary loins, that felt no ease;
The slippery seat betray'd the sliding part
That pressed it, and the feet hung dangling down,
Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.
These for the rich; the rest, whom fate had placed
In modest mediocrity, content
With base materials, sat on well-tann'd hides

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* Lady Austen, who suggested the "Task."

Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,
With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,
Or scarlet crewel* in the cushion fix'd:
If cushion might be call'd, what harder seem'd
Than the firm oak of which the frame was form'd.
No want of timber then was felt or fear'd
In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood
Ponderous, and fix'd by its own massy weight.
But elbows still were wanting; these, some say,
An alderman of Cripplegate contrived,
And some ascribe the invention to a priest,
Burly and big, and studious of his ease.
But rude at first, and not with easy slope
Receding wide, they press'd against the ribs,
And bruised the side and elevated high
Taught the raised shoulders to invade the ears.
Long time elapsed or e'er our rugged sires
Complain'd, though incommodiously pent in,
And ill at ease behind. The ladies first
'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.
Ingenious Fancy, never better pleased
Than when employ'd to accommodate the fair,
Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised
The soft settee; one elbow at each end,
And in the midst an elbow, it received,
United yet divided, twain at once.
So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne;†
And so two citizens who take the air
Close-pack'd and smiling, in a chaise and one.
But relaxation of the languid frame
By soft recumbency of outstretch'd limbs,
Was bliss reserved for happier days;—so slow
The growth of what is excellent, so hard
To attain perfection in this nether world.
Thus first Necessity invented stools,
Convenience next suggested elbow-chairs,
And Luxury the accomplish'd SOFA last.
  The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch the sick,
Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he
Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour
To sleep within the carriage more secure,
His legs depending at the open door.
Sweet sleep enjoys the curate in his desk,

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* Yarn or worsted.

† The two kings of Brentford, who sat on one throne and held a bouquet between them, were characters in the Duke of Buckingham's famous "Rehearsal," a comedy which without doubt suggested the "Critic."

The tedious rector drawling o'er his head,
And sweet the clerk below: but neither sleep
Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead,
Nor his who quits the box at midnight hour
To slumber in the carriage more secure,
Nor sleep enjoy'd by curate in his desk,
Nor yet the dozings of the clerk are sweet,
Compared with the repose the Sofa yields.
  Oh may I live exempted (while I live
Guiltless of pamper'd appetite obscene)
From pangs arthritic that infest the toe
Of libertine excess. The Sofa suits
The gouty limb, 'tis true; but gouty limb,
Though on a Sofa, may I never feel:
For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth close cropp'd by nibbling sheep
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink,
E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds
To enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames.
And still remember, nor without regret,
Of hours, that sorrow since has much endear'd,
How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,
Still hungering, penniless and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,
Or blushing crabs, or berries that emboss
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.
Hard fare! but such as boyish appetite
Disdains not, nor the palate undepraved
By culinary arts unsavoury deems.
No Sofa then awaited my return;
Nor Sofa then I needed. Youth repairs
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil
Incurring short fatigue; and though our years,
As life declines, speed rapidly away,
And not a year but pilfers as he goes
Some youthful grace that age would gladly keep,
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees
Their length and colour from the locks they spare;
The elastic spring of an unwearied foot
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,
That play of lungs, inhaling and again
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,
Mine have not pilfer'd yet; nor yet impair'd
My relish of fair prospect; sceues that soothed
Or charm'd me young, no longer young, I find

Still soothing, and of power to charm me still.
And witness, dear companion of my walks,*
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive
Fast lock'd in mine, with pleasure such as love,
Confirm'd by long experience of thy worth
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire,
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.
Thou knowest my praise of nature most sincere,
And that my raptures are not conjured up
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,
But genuine, and art partner of them all.
How oft upon yon eminence our pace
Has slacken'd to a pause, and we have borne
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,
While admiration feeding at the eye,
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.
Thence with what pleasure have we just discern'd
The distant plough slow moving, and beside
His labouring team, that swerved not from the track
The sturdy swain diminish'd to a boy.
Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank
Stand, never overlook'd, our favourite elms,
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the listening ear;
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.
Scenes must be beautiful which daily view'd,
Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years:
Praise justly due to those that I describe.
  Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
The tone of languid nature. Mighty winds,
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of Ocean on his winding shore,
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind;

* Mrs. Unwin.

Unnumber'd branches waving in the blast,
And all their leaves fast fluttering, all at once.
Nor less composure waits upon the roar
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighbouring fountain, or of rills that slip
Through the cleft rock, and chiming as they fall
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
In matted grass, that, with a livelier green,
Betrays the secret of their silent course.
Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,
But animated nature sweeter still,
To soothe and satisfy the human ear.
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one
The livelong night: nor these alone, whose notes
Nice-finger'd art must emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
In still repeated circles, screaming loud;
The jay, the pie, and even the boding owl
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.
Sounds inharmonious in themselves, and harsh,
Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
And only there, please highly for their sake.
  Peace to the artist, whose ingenious thought
Devised the weather-house, that useful toy!
Fearless of humid air and gathering rains
Forth steps the man, an emblem of myself,
More delicate, his timorous mate retires.
When winter soaks the fields, and female feet,
Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,
Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,
The task of new discoveries falls on me.
At such a season, and with such a charge,
Once went I forth, and found, till then unknown,
A cottage, whither oft we since repair:
'Tis perch'd upon the green hill-top, but close
Environ'd with a ring of branching elms
That overhang the thatch, itself unseen
Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset
With foliage of such dark redundant growth,
I call'd the low-roof'd lodge the *peasant's nest*.
And hidden as it is, and far remote
From such unpleasing sounds as haunt the ear
In village or in town, the bay of curs
Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,
And infants clamorous whether pleas'd or pain'd,
Oft have I wish'd the peaceful covert mine.
Here, I have said, at least I should possess
The poet's treasure, silence, and indulge

The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.
Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.
Its elevated site forbids the wretch
To drink sweet waters of the crystal well;
He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,
And, heavy-laden, brings his beverage home,
Far-fetch'd and little worth; nor seldom waits,
Dependent on the baker's punctual call,
To hear his creaking panniers at the door,
Angry and sad, and his last crust consumed.
So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest.*
If solitude make scant the means of life,
Society for me!—Thou seeming sweet,
Be still a pleasing object in my view,
My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade
Invites us: monument of ancient taste,
Now scorn'd, but worthy of a better fate.
Our fathers knew the value of a screen
From sultry suns, and in their shaded walks
And long protracted bowers, enjoy'd at noon
The gloom and coolness of declining day.
We bear our shades about us; self-depriv'd
Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,
And range an Indian waste without a tree.
Thanks to Benevolus*—he spares me yet
These chestnuts ranged in corresponding lines,
And, though himself so polish'd, still reprieves
The obsolete prolixity of shade.

Descending now (but cautious lest too fast,)
A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge,
We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip
Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.
Hence, ankle-deep in moss and flowery thyme,
We mount again, and feel at every step
Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.
He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,
Disfigures earth, and plotting in the dark,
Toils much to earn a monumental pile,
That may record the mischiefs he has done.

The summit gain'd, behold the proud alcove
That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures
The grand retreat from injuries impress'd

* John Courtenay Throckmorton, Esq., of Weston-Underwood, a great friend of Cowper's.

By rural carvers, who with knives deface
The panels, leaving an obscure, rude name,
In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.
So strong the zeal to immortalize himself
Beats in the breast of man, that even a few,
Few transient years, won from the abyss abhorr'd
Of blank oblivion, seem a glorious prize,
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye,
And posted on this speculative height
Exults in its command. The sheepfold here
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.
At first, progressive as a stream, they seek
The middle field; but scatter'd by degrees,
Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.
There, from the sunburnt hay-field, homeward creeps
The loaded wain, while, lighten'd of its charge,
The wain that meets it passes swiftly by,
The boorish driver leaning o'er his team,
Vociferous, and impatient of delay.
Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,
Diversified with trees of every growth,
Alike, yet various. Here the gray, smooth trunks
Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine,
Within the twilight of their distant shades;
There lost behind a rising ground, the wood
Seems sunk, and shorten'd to its topmost boughs.
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,
Though each its hue peculiar; paler some,
And of a wannish grey; the willow such,
And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,
And ash far stretching his umbrageous arm;
Of deeper green the elm; and deeper still,
Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.
Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun,
The maple, and the beech of oily nuts
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve
Diffusing odours: nor unnoted pass
The sycamore, capricious in attire,
Now green, now tawny, and, ere autumn yet
Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright.
O'er these, but far beyond (a spacious map
Of hill and valley interposed between,)
The Ouse, dividing the well-water'd land,
Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,
As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.
  Hence the declivity is sharp and short,
And such the re-ascent; between them weeps
A little naiad her impoverish'd urn

All summer long, which winter fills again.
The folded gates would bar my progress now,
But that the lord of this enclosed demesne,
Communicative of the good he owns,
Admits me to a share: the guiltless eye
Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.
Refreshing change! where now the blazing sun?
By short transition we have lost his glare,
And stepp'd at once into a cooler clime.
Ye fallen avenues! once more I mourn
Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice
That yet a remnant of your race survives.
How airy and how light the graceful arch,
Yet awful as the consecrated roof
Re-echoing pious anthems! while beneath
The chequer'd earth seems restless as a flood
Brush'd by the wind. So sportive is the light
Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,
Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
And darkening, and enlightening, as the leaves
Play wanton, every moment, every spot.
And now, with nerves new-braced and spirits cheer'd,
We tread the wilderness, whose well-roll'd walks,
With curvature of slow and easy sweep—
Deception innocent—gives ample space
To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next;
Between the upright shafts of whose tall elms
We may discern the thresher at his task.
Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff;
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
Of atoms, sparkling in the noonday beam.
Come hither, ye that press your beds of down
And sleep not; see him sweating o'er his bread
Before he eats it.—'Tis the primal curse,
But soften'd into mercy; made the pledge
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.
By ceaseless action, all that is subsists.
Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel
That Nature rides upon, maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves.
Its own revolvency uphol'; the world.
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,
And fit the limpid element for use,
Else noxious: oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams,
All feel the fresh'ning impulse, and are cleansed

By restless undulation. Even the oak
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm:
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel
The impression of the blast with proud disdain,
Frowning as if in his unconscious arm
He held the thunder. But the monarch owes
His firm stability to what he scorns,
More fix'd below, the more disturb'd above.
The law, by which all creatures else are bound,
Binds man, the lord of all. Himself derives
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.
The sedentary stretch their lazy length
When custom bids, but no refreshment find,
For none they need: the languid eye, the cheek
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,
And wither'd muscle, and the vapid soul,
Reproach their owner with that love of rest
To which he forfeits even the rest he loves.
Not such the alert and active. Measure life
By its true worth, the comforts it affords,
And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.
Good health, and its associate in the most,
Good temper; spirits prompt to undertake,
And not soon spent, though in an arduous task;
The powers of fancy and strong thought are theirs;
Even age itself seems privileged in them
With clear exemption from its own defects.
A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front
The veteran shows, and gracing a gray beard
With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave
Sprightly, and old almost without decay.

Like a coy maiden, Ease, when courted most,
Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine
Who oftenest sacrifice are favour'd least.
The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws,
Is Nature's dictate. Strange! there should be found,
Who, self-imprison'd in their proud saloons,
Renounce the odours of the open field
For the unscented fictions of the loom;
Who, satisfied with only pencill'd scenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
The inferior wonders of an artist's hand.
Lovely indeed the mimic works of Art,
But Nature's works far lovelier. I admire,
None more admires, the painter's magic skill,
Who shows me that which I shall never see,
Conveys a distant country into mine,

And throws Italian light on English walls:
But imitative strokes can do no more
Than please the eye—sweet Nature every sense.
The air salubrious of her lofty hills,
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
And music of her woods—no works of man
May rival these; these all bespeak a power
Peculiar, and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
'Tis free to all—'tis every day renew'd;
Who scorns it, starves deservedly at home.
He does not scorn it, who, imprison'd long
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey
To sallow sickness, which the vapours dank
And clammy of his dark abode have bred,
Escapes at last to liberty and light:
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue,
His eye relumines its extinguish'd fires,
He walks, he leaps, he runs—is wing'd with joy,
And riots in the sweets of every breeze.
He does not scorn it, who has long endured
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.
Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflamed
With acrid salts; his very heart athirst
To gaze at Nature in her green array,
Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possess'd
With visions prompted by intense desire:
Fair fields appear below, such as he left
Far distant, such as he would die to find,—
He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.*
  The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns;
The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown,
And sullen sadness, that o'ershade, distort,
And mar the face of beauty, when no cause
For such immeasurable woe appears,
These Flora banishes, and gives the fair
Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her own.
It is the constant revolution, stale
And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,
That palls and satiates, and makes languid life
A pedler's pack, that bows the bearer down.
Health suffers, and the spirits ebb; the heart
Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast
Is famish'd—finds no music in the song,
No smartness in the jest, and wonders why.

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* These lines refer to a singular hallucination to which seamen were subject when suffering from scurvy. It is called a calenture.

Yet thousands still desire to journey on,
Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.
The paralytic who can hold her cards
But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand
To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort
Her mingled suits and sequences, and sits
Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad
And silent cypher, while her proxy plays.
Others are dragg'd into the crowded room
Between supporters; and, once seated, sit
Through downright inability to rise,
Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.
These speak a loud memento. Yet even these
Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he
That overhangs a torrent, to a twig.
They love it, and yet loathe it; fear to die,
Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.
Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,
The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds
Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,
And their inveterate habits, all forbid.
  Whom call we gay? That honour has been long
The boast of mere pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,
That dries his feathers saturate with dew
Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
Of dayspring overshoot his humble nest.
The peasant too, a witness of his song,
Himself a songster, is as gay as he.
But save me from the gaiety of those
Whose headaches nail them to a noonday bed:
And save me too from theirs whose haggard eyes
Flash desperation, and betray their pangs
For property stripp'd off by cruel chance;
From gaiety that fills the bones with pain,
The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe.
  The earth was made so various, that the mind
Of desultory man, studious of change,
And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.
Prospects, however lovely, may be seen
Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight,
Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off
Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.
Then snug enclosures in the shelter'd vale,
Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,
Delight us, happy to renounce awhile,
Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,
That such short absence may endear it more.

Then forests, or the savage rock, may please,
That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts
Above the reach of man: his hoary head,
Conspicuous many a league, the mariner
Bound homeward, and in hope already there,
Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist
A girdle of half-wither'd shrubs he shows,
And at his feet the baffled billows die.
The common, overgrown with fern, and rough
With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deform'd,
And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf
Smells fresh, and, rich in odoriferous herbs
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
With luxury of unexpected sweets.
There often wanders one, whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimm'd
With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound.
A serving-maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
To distant shores, and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers; fancy too,
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to know.
She heard the doleful tidings of his death,
And never smiled again. And now she roams
The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day,
And there, unless when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides a gown
More tatter'd still; and both but ill conceal
A bosom heaved with never-ceasing sighs.
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
Though pinch'd with cold, asks never.—Kate is crazed.*
I see a column of slow-rising smoke
O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
Receives the morsel; flesh obscene of dog,

* "Kate" was a real personage, well known to the poet.

Or vermin, or, at best, of cock purloin'd
From his accustom'd perch. Hard-faring race!
They pick their fuel out of every hedge,
Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthless dross into its place;
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.
Strange! that a creature rational, and cast
In human mould, should brutalise by choice
His nature, and, though capable of arts
By which the world might profit and himself,
Self-banish'd from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil!
Yet even these, though feigning sickness oft,
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,
Can change their whine into a mirthful note
When safe occasion offers; and with dance
And music of the bladder and the bag,
Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world;
And breathing wholesome air, and wandering much,
Need other physic none to heal the effects
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.
  Blest he, though undistinguish'd from the crowd
By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside
His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,
The manners and the arts of civil life.
His wants, indeed, are many; but supply
Is obvious; placed within the easy reach
Of temperate wishes and industrious hands.
Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil;
Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns,
And terrible to sight, as when she springs
(If e'er she spring spontaneous) in remote
And barbarous climes, where violence prevails,
And strength is lord of all; but gentle, kind,
By culture tamed, by liberty refresh'd,
And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.
War and the chase engross the savage whole:
War follow'd for revenge, or to supplant
The envied tenants of some happier spot;

The chase for sustenance, precarious trust!
His hard condition with severe constraint
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth
Of wisdom, proves a school in which he learns
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,
Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.
Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,
And thus the rangers of the western world,
Where it advances far into the deep,
Towards the Antarctic. Even the favour'd isles,
So lately found,* although the constant sun
Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
Can boast but little virtue; and inert
Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain
In manners—victims of luxurious ease.
These therefore I can pity, placed remote
From all that science traces, art invents,
Or inspiration teaches; and enclosed
In boundless oceans, never to be pass'd
By navigators uninform'd as they,
Or plough'd perhaps by British bark again.
But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,
Thee, gentle savage! † whom no love of thee
Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,
Or else vain-glory, prompted us to draw
Forth from thy native bowers, to show thee here
With what superior skill we can abuse
The gifts of Providence, and squander life.
The dream is past; and thou hast found again
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,
And homestall thatch'd with leaves. But hast thou found
Their former charms? And having seen our state,
Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp
Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,
And heard our music; are thy simple friends,
Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights
As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys
Lost nothing by comparison with ours?
Rude as thou art, (for we return'd thee rude
And ignorant, except of outward show,)
I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart
And spiritless, as never to regret
Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.
Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,
And asking of the surge that bathes thy foot

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* The Society and Friendly Islands.
† Omai, interpreter to Captain Cook in his third voyage.

If ever it has wash'd our distant shore.
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,
A patriot's for his country: thou art sad
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,
From which no power of thine can raise her up.
Thus fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,
Perhaps errs little when she paints thee thus.
She tells me too, that duly every morn
Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye
Exploring far and wide the watery waste
For sight of ship from England. Every speck
Seen in the dim horizon, turns thee pale
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.
But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,
And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepared
To dream all night of what the day denied.
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,
Disinterested good, is not our trade.
We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;
And must be bribed to compass earth again
By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.
But though true worth and virtue, in the mild
And genial soil of cultivated life
Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,
Yet not in cities oft: in proud and gay
And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and feculence of every land.
In cities foul example on most minds
Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds
In gross and pamper'd cities sloth and lust,
And wantonness and gluttonous excess.
In cities, vice is hidden with most ease,
Or seen with least reproach; and virtue, taught
By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
Beyond the achievement of successful flight.
I do confess them nurseries of the arts,
In which they flourish most; where, in the beams
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye
Of public note, they reach their perfect size.
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaim'd
The fairest capital of all the world,
By riot and incontinence the worst.
There, touch'd by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes
A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees
All her reflected features. Bacon there
Gives more than female beauty to a stone,

And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.
Nor does the chisel occupy alone
The powers of sculpture, but the style as much;
Each province of her art her equal care.
With nice incision of her guided steel
She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil
So sterile, with what charms soe'er she will,
The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.
Where finds Philosophy her eagle eye,
With which she gazes at yon burning disk
Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?
In London. Where her implements exact,
With which she calculates, computes, and scans
All distance, motion, magnitude, and now
Measures an atom, and now girds a world?
In London. Where has commerce such a mart,
So rich, so throng'd, so drain'd, and so supplied
As London, opulent, enlarged, and still
Increasing London? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth than she,
A more accomplish'd world's chief glory now.
She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two
That so much beauty would do well to purge;
And show this queen of cities, that so fair
May yet be foul, so witty, yet not wise.
It is not seemly, nor of good report,
That she is slack in discipline; more prompt
To avenge than to prevent the breach of law;
That she is rigid in denouncing death
On petty robbers, and indulges life
And liberty, and ofttimes honour too,
To peculators of the public gold;
That thieves at home must hang, but he, that puts
Into his overgorged and bloated purse
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,
That, through profane and infidel contempt
Of holy writ, she has presumed to annul
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,
The total ordinance and will of God;
Advancing Fashion to the post of Truth,
And centering all authority in modes
And customs of her own, till Sabbath rites
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,*
And knees and hassocks are well nigh divorced.
God made the country, and man made the town:
What wonder then, that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught

That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves?
Possess ye therefore, ye who, borne about
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes
But such as art contrives, possess ye still
Your element; there only ye can shine,
There only minds like yours can do no harm.
Our groves were planted to console at noon
The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve
The moonbeam, sliding softly in between
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare
The splendour of your lamps, they but eclipse
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound
Our more harmonious notes: the thrush departs
Scared, and the offended nightingale is mute.
There is a public mischief in your mirth;
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours,
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.

BOOK II.—THE TIME-PIECE.

ARGUMENT

Reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former book—Peace among the nations recommended on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow—Prodigies enumerated—Sicilian earthquakes—Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin—God the agent in them—The philosophy that stops at secondary causes reprôved—Our own late miscarriages accounted for—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontainbleau—But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation—The reverend advertiser of engraved sermons—Petit-maître parson—The good preacher—Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb—Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved—Apostrophe to popular applause—Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with—Sum of the whole matter—Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity—Their folly and extravagance—The mischiefs of profusion—Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the universities.

Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more! My ear is pain'd,
My soul is sick with every day's report

Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart—
It does not feel for man; the natural bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not colour'd like his own, and having power
To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.
Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed,
Make enemies of nations, who had else
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;
And worse than all, and most to be deplored
As human Nature's broadest, foulest blot,
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that Mercy with a bleeding heart
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.
Then what is man? And what man seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush
And hang his head, to think himself a man?
I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation prized above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no slaves at home.—Then why abroad?
And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.
Slaves cannot breathe in England;* if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free,
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire; that where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.
Sure there is need of social intercourse,
Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,
Between the nations, in a world that seems
To toll the death-bell of its own decease,

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* This decision was given in the case of Somerset, a negro, in 1772. Dr. Johnson took a humane interest in him.

And by the voice of all its elements
To preach the general doom. When were the winds
Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?
When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap
Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?
Fires from beneath, and meteors from above,
Portentous, unexampled, inexplain'd,
Have kindled beacons in the skies, and the old
And crazy earth has had her shaking fits
More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
And Nature with a dim and sickly eye
To wait the close of all? But grant her end
More distant, and that prophecy demands
A longer respite, unaccomplish'd yet;
Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak
Displeasure in His breast who smites the earth
Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice.
And 'tis but seemly that, where all deserve
And stand exposed by common peccancy
To what no few have felt, there should be peace,
And brethren in calamity should love.
Alas for Sicily!* rude fragments now
Lie scatter'd where the shapely column stood.
Her palaces are dust. In all her streets
The voice of singing and the sprightly chord
Are silent. Revelry and dance and show
Suffer a syncope and solemn pause,
While God performs upon the trembling stage
Of His own works His dreadful part alone.
How doth the earth receive Him?—With what signs
Of gratulation and delight, her King?
Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,
Her sweetest flowers, her aromatic gums,
Disclosing Paradise where'er He treads?
She quakes at His approach. Her hollow womb
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps
And fiery caverns roars beneath His foot.
The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,
For He has touch'd them. From the extremest point
Of elevation down into the abyss,
His wrath is busy and His frown is felt.
The rocks fall headlong and the valleys rise,
The rivers die into offensive pools,

* Frightful earthquakes took place in Sicily in 1783.

And, charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross
And mortal nuisance into all the air.
What solid was, by transformation strange
Grows fluid, and the fix'd and rooted earth,
Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,
Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl
Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs
And agonies of human and of brute
Multitudes, fugitive on every side,
And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene
Migrates uplifted, and with all its soil
Alighting in far-distant fields, finds out
A new possessor, and survives the change.
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and upwrought
To an enormous and o'erbearing height,
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice
Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore
Resistless. Never such a sudden flood,
Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,
Possess'd an inland scene. Where now the throng
That press'd the beach, and hasty to depart
Look'd to the sea for safety? They are gone,
Gone with the refluent wave into the deep—
A prince with half his people!* Ancient towers,
And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes
Where beauty oft and letter'd worth consume
Life in the unproductive shades of death,
Fall prone; the pale inhabitants come forth,
And, happy in their unforeseen release
From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy
The terrors of the day that sets them free.
Who then that has thee, would not hold thee fast,
Freedom! whom they that lose thee, so regret,
That even a judgment making way for thee,
Seems in their eyes, a mercy for thy sake.
Such evil sin hath wrought; and such a flame
Kindled in heaven, that it burns down to earth,
And in the furious inquest that it makes
On God's behalf, lays waste His fairest works.
The very elements, though each be meant
The minister of man, to serve his wants,
Conspire against him. With his breath, he draws
A plague into his blood; and cannot use

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* Numbers perished at Scylla; the Prince persuaded a great number of the survivors to put to sea for safety; but the waves rose with great fury, and all in the boats perished with their Prince.—See Lyell's "Principles of Geology," p. 488, ed. 1853.

Life's necessary means, but he must die.
Storms rise to o'erwhelm him: or if stormy winds
Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,
And needing none assistance of the storm,
Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.
The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,
Or make his house his grave: nor so content,
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,
And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs.
What then—were they the wicked above all,
And we the righteous, whose fast-anchor'd isle
Moved not, while theirs was rock'd like a light skiff,
The sport of every wave? No: none are clear,
And none than we more guilty. But where all
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts
Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose His mark.
May punish, if He please, the less, to warn
The more malignant. If He spared not them,
Tremble and be amazed at thine escape,
Far guiltier England! lest He spare not thee.
Happy the man who sees a God employ'd
In all the good and ill that chequer life!
Resolving all events, with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.
Did not His eye rule all things, and intend
The least of our concerns, (since from the least
The greatest oft originate,) could chance
Find place in His dominion, or dispose
One lawless particle to thwart His plan,
Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen
Contingence might alarm Him, and disturb
The smooth and equal course of His affairs.
This truth Philosophy, though eagle-eyed
In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks,
And, having found His instrument, forgets
Or disregards, or more presumptuous still,
Denies the power that wills it. God proclaims
His hot displeasure against foolish men
That live an atheist life: involves the heaven
In tempests, quits His grasp upon the winds,
And gives them all their fury: bids a plague
Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
And putrefy the breath of blooming health.
He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend
Blows mildew from between his shrivell'd lips,
And taints the golden ear. He springs His mines,
And desolates a nation at a blast.

Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells
Of homogeneal and discordant springs
And principles; of causes, how they work
By necessary laws their sure effects;
Of action and reaction. He has found
The source of the disease that nature feels,
And bids the world take heart and banish fear.
Thou fool! will thy discovery of the cause
Suspend the effect, or heal it? Has not God
Still wrought by means since first He made the world,
And did He not of old employ His means
To drown it? What is His creation less
Than a capacious reservoir of means
Form'd for His use, and ready at His will?
Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve, ask of Him,
Or ask of whomsoever He has taught,
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.
England, with all thy faults, I love thee still,
My country! and while yet a nook is left
Where English minds and manners may be found,
Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year, most part deform'd
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies
And fields without a flower, for warmer France
With all her vines; nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage and her myrtle bowers.
To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task;
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
Thy joys and sorrows with as true a heart
As any thunderer there. And I can feel
Thy follies too, and with a just disdain
Frown at effeminates, whose very looks
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.
How, in the name of soldiership and sense,
Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth
And tender as a girl, all-essenced o'er
With odours, and as profligate as sweet,
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,
And love when they should fight; when such as these
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark
Of her magnificent and awful cause?
Time was when it was praise and boast enough
In every clime, and travel where we might,
That we were born her children; praise enough
To fill the ambition of a private man,

That Chatham's language was his mother-tongue,
And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.
Farewell those honours, and farewell with them
The hope of such hereafter. They have fallen
Each in his field of glory: one in arms,
And one in council—Wolfe upon the lap
Of smiling Victory that moment won,
And Chatham, heart-sick of his country's shame!
They made us many soldiers. Chatham still
Consulting England's happiness at home,
Secured it by an unforgiving frown
If any wrong'd her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,
Put so much of his heart into his act,
That his example had a magnet's force,
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.
Those suns are set. Oh, rise some other such!
Or all that we have left, is empty talk
Of old achievements, and despair of new.
 Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck
With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,
That no rude savour maritime invade
The nose of nice nobility. Breathe soft
Ye clarionets, and softer still ye flutes,
That winds and waters lull'd by magic sounds
May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore.
True, we have lost an empire—let it pass.
True, we may thank the perfidy of France
That pick'd the jewel out of England's crown,
With all the cunning of an envious shrew.
And let that pass,—'twas but a trick of state.
A brave man knows no malice, but at once
Forgets in peace the injuries of war,
And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace.
And shamed as we have been, to the very beard
Braved and defied, and in our own sea proved
Too weak for those decisive blows that once
Insured us mastery there, we yet retain
Some small pre-eminence, we justly boast
At least superior jockeyship, and claim
The honours of the turf as all our own.
Go then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,
And show the shame ye might conceal at home,
In foreign eyes!—be grooms, and win the plate,
Where once your nobler fathers won a crown!—
'Tis generous to communicate your skill
To those that need it. Folly is soon learn'd:
And, under such preceptors, who can fail!

There is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,
The expedients and inventions multiform
To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win,—
T' arrest the fleeting images that fill
The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,
And force them sit, till he has pencill'd off
A faithful likeness of the forms he views;
Then to dispose his copies with such art
That each may find its most propitious light
And shine by situation, hardly less
Than by the labour and the skill it cost,
Are occupations of the poet's mind
So pleasing, and that steal away the thought
With such address from themes of sad import,
That, lost in his own musings, happy man!
He feels the anxieties of life, denied
Their wonted entertainment, all retire.
Such joys has he that sings. But ah! not such,
Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.
Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps
Aware of nothing arduous in a task
They never undertook, they little note
His dangers or escapes, and haply find
Their least amusement where he found the most.
But is amusement all? Studious of song,
And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,
I would not trifle merely, though the world
Be loudest in their praise who do no more.
Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay?
It may correct a foible, may chastise
The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,
Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch;
But where are its sublimer trophies found?
What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaim'd
By rigour, or whom laugh'd into reform?
Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed:
Laugh'd at, he laughs again; and, stricken hard,
Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,
That fear no discipline of human hands.
The pulpit, therefore, (and I name it fill'd
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware
With what intent I touch that holy thing;)
The pulpit (when the satirist has at last,
Strutting and vapouring in an empty school,
Spent all his force, and made no proselyte,)
I say the pulpit (in the sober use

Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament of virtue's cause.
There stands the messenger of truth. There stands
The legate of the skies; his theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him, the violated law speaks out
Its thunders, and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And, arm'd himself in panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect.
Are all such teachers? would to Heaven all were!
But hark,—the Doctor's voice!*—fast wedged between
Two empirics he stands, and with swollen cheeks
Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far
Than all invective is his bold harangue,
While through that public organ of report
He hails the clergy; and defying shame,
Announces to the world his own and theirs.
He teaches those to read, whom schools dismiss'd,
And colleges, untaught: sells accent, tone,
And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer
The *adagio* and *andante* it demands.
He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern use; transforms old print
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.
Are there who purchase of the Doctor's ware?
Oh name it not in Gath!—it cannot be,
That grave and learned clerks should need such aid.
He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,
Assuming thus a rank unknown before—
Grand caterer and drynurse of the Church.
I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause.
To such I render more than mere respect,

* Dr. Trusler, who first abridged and wrote sermons for sale. He compiled and abridged many works, and was well known at that time as a teacher of elocution.

Whose actions say that they respect themselves.
But loose in morals, and in manners vain,
In conversation frivolous, in dress
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse,
Frequent in park, with lady at his side,
Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes,
But rare at home, and never at his books,
Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card;
Constant at routs, familiar with a round
Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor;
Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
And well prepared by ignorance and sloth,
By infidelity and love of the world,
To make God's work a sinecure; a slave
To his own pleasures and his patron's pride:—
From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,
Preserve the Church! and lay not careless hands
On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.
  Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master-strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too; affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture! Is it like?—Like whom?
The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
And then skip down again; pronounce a text,
Cry hem! and reading what they never wrote,
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene.
  In man or woman, but far most in man,
And most of all in man that ministers
And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe
All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn;
Object of my implacable disgust.
What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
A silly fond conceit of his fair form
And just proportion, fashionable mien,
And pretty face, in presence of his God?
Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
As with the diamond on his lily hand,

And play his brilliant parts before my eyes
When I am hungry for the bread of life?
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
His noble office, and, instead of truth,
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock.
Therefore avaunt all attitude and stare,
And start theatric, practised at the glass.
I seek divine simplicity in him
Who handles things divine; and all beside,
Though learn'd with labour, and though much admired
By curious eyes and judgments ill inform'd,
To me is odious as the nasal twang
Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,
Misled by custom, strain celestial themes
Through the press'd nostril, spectacle-bestrid.
Some, decent in demeanour while they preach,
That task perform'd, relapse into themselves,
And having spoken wisely, at the close
Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye—
Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not.
Forth comes the pocket mirror. First we stroke
An eyebrow; next, compose a straggling lock;
Then with an air, most gracefully perform'd,
Fall back into our seat, extend an arm,
And lay it at its ease with gentle care,
With handkerchief in hand, depending low.
The better hand more busy, gives the nose
Its bergamot, or aids the indebted eye
With opera-glass to watch the moving scene
And recognise the slow-retiring fair.
Now this is fulsome, and offends me more
Than in a Churchman slovenly neglect
And rustic coarseness would. A heavenly mind
May be indifferent to her house of clay,
And slight the hovel as beneath her care;
But how a body so fantastic, trim,
And quaint in its deportment and attire,
Can lodge a heavenly mind—demands a doubt.
He that negotiates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;
To break a jest, when pity would inspire
Pathetic exhortation; and to address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
When sent with God's commission to the heart.
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip

Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
And I consent you take it for your text,
Your only one, till sides and benches fail.
No: he was serious in a serious cause,
And understood too well the weighty terms
That he had ta'en in charge. He would not stoop
To conquer those by jocular exploits,
Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain.
  Oh, popular applause! what heart of man
Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?
The wisest and the best feel urgent need
Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales;
But swell'd into a gust—who then, alas!
With all his canvas set, and inexpert,
And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power?
Praise from the rivell'd lips of toothless, bald
Decrepitude, and in the looks of lean
And craving poverty, and in the bow
Respectful of the smutch'd artificer,
Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb
The bias of the purpose. How much more
Pour'd forth by beauty splendid and polite,
In language soft as adoration breathes?
Ah spare your idol! think him human still;
Charms he may have, but he has frailties too;
Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.
  All truth is from the sempiternal source
Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome,
Drew from the stream below. More favour'd, we
Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain-head.
To them it flow'd much mingled and defiled
With hurtful error, prejudice, and dreams
Illusive of philosophy, so-call'd,
But falsely. Sages after sages strove
In vain to filter off a crystal draught
Pure from the lees, which often more enhanced
The thirst than slaked it, and not seldom bred
Intoxication and delirium wild.
In vain they push'd inquiry to the birth
And spring-time of the world; asked, Whence is man?
Why form'd at all? And wherefore as he is?
Where must he find his Maker? With what rites
Adore Him? Will He hear, accept, and bless?
Or does He sit regardless of His works?
Has man within him an immortal seed?
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive
His ashes, where? and in what weal or woe?
Knots worthy of solution, which alone

A Deity could solve. Their answers vague,
And all at random, fabulous and dark,
Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life
Defective and unsanction'd, proved too weak
To bind the roving appetite, and lead
Blind Nature to a God not yet reveal'd.
'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries, except her own,
And so illuminates the path of life,
That fools discover it, and stray no more.
Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,
My man of morals, nurtured in the shades
Of Academus, is this false or true?
Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools?
If Christ, then why resort at every turn
To Athens or to Rome, for wisdom short
Of man's occasions, when in Him reside
Grace, knowledge, comfort, an unfathom'd store?
How oft, when Paul has served us with a text,
Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preach'd!
Men that, if now alive, would sit content
And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,
Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,
Their thirst for knowledge, and their candour too.
  And thus it is. The pastor, either vain
By nature, or by flattery made so, taught
To gaze at his own splendour, and to exalt
Absurdly, not his office, but himself;
Or unenlighten'd, and too proud to learn,
Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach,
Perverting often by the stress of lewd
And loose example, whom he should instruct,
Exposes and holds up to broad disgrace
The noblest function, and discredits much
The brightest truths that man has ever seen.
For ghostly counsel, if it either fall
Below the exigence, or be not back'd
With show of love, at least with hopeful proof
Of some sincerity on the giver's part;
Or be dishonour'd in the exterior form
And mode of its conveyance, by such tricks
As move derision, or by foppish airs
And histrionic mummery, that let down
The pulpit to the level of the stage,
Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.
The weak perhaps are moved, but are not taught,
While prejudice in men of stronger minds
Takes deeper root, confirm'd by what they see.

A relaxation of religion's hold
Upon the roving and untutor'd heart
Soon follows, and the curb of conscience snapp'd,
The laity run wild.—But do they now?
Note their extravagance, and be convinced.
 As nations, ignorant of God, contrive
A wooden one, so we, no longer taught
By monitors that mother Church supplies,
Now make our own. Posterity will ask,
(If e'er posterity see verse of mine,)
Some fifty or a hundred lustrums hence,
What was a monitor in George's days?
My very gentle reader, yet unborn,
Of whom I needs must augur better things,
Since Heaven would sure grow weary of a world
Productive only of a race like ours,
A monitor is wood. Plankshaven thin.
We wear it at our backs. There closely braced
And neatly fitted, it compresses hard
The prominent and most unsightly bones,
And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use
Sovereign and most effectual to secure
A form not now gymnastic as of yore,
From rickets and distortion, else, our lot.
But thus admonish'd we can walk erect,
One proof at least of manhood; while the friend
Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge.
Our habits costlier than Lucullus wore,
And by caprice as multiplied as his,
Just please us while the fashion is at full,
But change with every moon. The sycophant
Who waits to dress us, arbitrates their date,
Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye;
Finds one ill made, another obsolete,
This fits not nicely, that is ill conceived,
And making prize of all that he condemns,
With our expenditure defrays his own.
Variety's the very spice of life,
That gives it all its flavour. We have run
Through every change that fancy at the loom
Exhausted, has had genius to supply,
And studious of mutation still, discard
A real elegance, a little used,
For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.
We sacrifice to dress, till household joys
And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,
And keeps our larder lean; puts out our fires,
And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,

Where peace and hospitality might reign.
What man that lives, and that knows how to live,
Would fail to exhibit at the public shows
A form as splendid as the proudest there,
Though appetite raise outcries at the cost?
A man of the town dines late, but soon enough,
With reasonable forecast and despatch,
To insure a side-box station at half-price.
You think, perhaps, so delicate his dress,
His daily fare as delicate. Alas!
He picks clean teeth, and, busy as he seems
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet.
The rout is folly's circle, which she draws
With magic wand. So potent is the spell,
That none, decoy'd into that fatal ring,
Unless by Heaven's peculiar grace, escape.
There we grow early gray, but never wise;
There form connexions, but acquire no friend;
Solicit pleasure hopeless of success;
Waste youth in occupations only fit
For second childhood, and devote old age
To sports which only childhood could excuse.
There they are happiest who dissemble best
Their weariness; and they the most polite
Who squander time and treasure with a smile,
Though at their own destruction. She that asks
Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,
And hates their coming. They, what can they less?
Make just reprisals, and with cringe and shrug,
And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.
All catch the frenzy, downward from her Grace,
Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,
And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,
To her who, frugal only that her thrift
May feed excesses she can ill afford,
Is hackney'd home unlackey'd; who in haste
Alighting, turns the key in her own door,
And at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.
Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,
On Fortune's velvet altar offering up
Their last poor pittance—Fortune most severe
Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far
Than all that held their routs in Juno's heaven.
So fare we in this prison-house the world.
And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see
So many maniacs dancing in their chains.
They gaze upon the links that hold them fast,

With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,
Then shake them in despair, and dance again.
  Now basket up the family of plagues
That waste our vitals. Peculation, sale
Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds
By forgery, by subterfuge of law,
By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen
As the necessities their authors feel;
Then cast them closely bundled, every brat
At the right door. Profusion is the sire.
Profusion unrestrain'd, with all that's base
In character, has litter'd all the land,
And bred within the memory of no few,
A priesthood such as Baal's was of old,
A people such as never was till now.
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all
That gives society its beauty, strength,
Convenience, and security, and use:
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapp'd
And gibbeted as fast as catchpole claws
Can seize the slippery prey: unties the knot
Of union, and converts the sacred band
That holds mankind together, to a scourge.
Profusion deluging a state with lusts
Of grossest nature and of worse effects,
Prepares it for its ruin: hardens, blinds,
And warps the consciences of public men
Till they can laugh at virtue; mock the fools
That trust them; and, in the end, disclose a face
That would have shock'd credulity herself
Unmask'd, vouchsafing this their sole excuse;
Since all alike are selfish—why not they?
This does Profusion, and the accursèd cause
Of such deep mischief, has itself a cause.
  In colleges and halls, in ancient days,
When learning, virtue, piety, and truth
Were precious, and inculcated with care,
There dwelt a sage call'd Discipline. His head
Not yet by time completely silver'd o'er,
Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,
But strong for service still, and unimpair'd.
His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
Play'd on his lips, and in his speech was heard
Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.
The occupation dearest to his heart
Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke
The head of modest and ingenuous worth
That blush'd at his own praise; and press the youth

Close to his side that pleased him. Learning grew
Beneath his care, a thriving vigorous plant;
The mind was well-inform'd, the passions held
Subordinate, and diligence was choice.
If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must,
That one among so many overleap'd
The limits of control, his gentle eye
Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke;
His frown was full of terror, and his voice
Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe
As left him not, till penitence had won
Lost favour back again, and closed the breach.
But Discipline, a faithful servant long,
Declined at length into the vale of years;
A palsy struck his arm, his sparkling eye
Was quench'd in rheums of age, his voice unstrung
Grew tremulous, and moved derision more
Than reverence, in perverse rebellious youth.
So colleges and halls neglected much
Their good old friend, and Discipline at length
O'erlook'd and unemploy'd, fell sick and died.
Then study languish'd, emulation slept,
And virtue fled. The schools became a scene
Of solemn farce, where ignorance in stilts,
His cap well lined with logic not his own,
With parrot-tongue perform'd the scholar's part,
Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.
Then compromise had place, and scrutiny
Became stone-blind, precedence went in truck,
And he was competent whose purse was so.
A dissolution of all bonds ensued;
The curbs invented for the mulish mouth
Of headstrong youth were broken; bars and bolts
Grew rusty by disuse, and massy gates
Forgot their office, opening with a touch;
Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade:
The tassell'd cap and the spruce band a jest,
A mockery of the world. What need of these
For gamesters, jockeys, brothellers impure,
Spendthrifts and booted sportsmen, oftener seen
With belted waist and pointers at their heels,
Than in the bounds of duty? What was learn'd,
If aught was learn'd in childhood, is forgot,
And such expense as pinches parents blue,
And mortifies the liberal hand of love,
Is squander'd in pursuit of idle sports
And vicious pleasures; buys the boy a name,
That sits a stigma on his father's house,

And cleaves through life inseparably close
To him that wears it. What can after-games
Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,
The lewd vain world that must receive him soon,
Add to such erudition thus acquired,
Where science and where virtue are profess'd?
They may confirm his habits, rivet fast
His folly, but to spoil him is a task
That bids defiance to the united powers
Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews.
Now, blame we most the nurslings or the nurse?
The children crook'd, and twisted, and deform'd
Through want of care, or her whose winking eye
And slumbering oscitancy mars the brood?
The nurse no doubt. Regardless of her charge,
She needs herself correction; needs to learn
That it is dangerous sporting with the world,
With things so sacred as a nation's trust,
The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.
  All are not such. I had a brother once—
Peace to the memory of a man of worth,
A man of letters, and of manners too;
Of manners sweet as virtue always wears,
When gay good-nature dresses her in smiles.
He graced a college,* in which order yet
Was sacred; and was honour'd, loved, and wept
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.
Some minds are temper'd happily, and mix'd
With such ingredients of good sense and taste
Of what is excellent in man, they thirst
With such a zeal to be what they approve,
That no restraints can circumscribe them more
Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake.
Nor can example hurt them; what they see
Of vice in others but enhancing more
The charms of virtue in their just esteem.
If such escape contagion, and emerge
Pure, from so foul a pool, to shine abroad,
And give the world their talents and themselves,
Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth
Exposed their inexperience to the snare,
And left them to an undirected choice.
  See then! the quiver broken and decay'd,
In which are kept our arrows. Rusting there
In wild disorder, and unfit for use,

* Benet, now Corpus Christi, Cambridge.

What wonder, if discharged into the world,
They shame their shooters with a random flight,
Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine.
Well may the Church wage unsuccessful war,
With such artillery arm'd. Vice parries wide
The undreaded volley with a sword of straw,
And stands an impudent and fearless mark.
Have we not track'd the felon home, and found
His birthplace and his dam? The country mourns,
Mourns, because every plague that can infest
Society, and that saps and worms the base
Of the edifice that Policy has raised,
Swarms in all quarters; meets the eye, the ear,
And suffocates the breath at every turn.
Profusion breeds them; and the cause itself
Of that calamitous mischief has been found:
Found too where most offensive, in the skirts
Of the robed pedagogue. Else, let the arraign'd
Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge.
So when the Jewish leader stretch'd his arm,
And waved his rod divine, a race obscene,
Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,
Polluting Egypt. Gardens, fields, and plains
Were cover'd with the pest. The streets were fill'd;
The croaking nuisance lurk'd in every nook,
Nor palaces nor even chambers 'scaped,
And the land stank, so numerous was the fry.

BOOK III.—THE GARDEN.

ARGUMENT.

Self-recollection and reproof—Address to domestic happiness—Some account of myself—The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise—Justification of my censures—Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher—The question, What is truth, answered by other questions—Domestic happiness addressed again—Few lovers of the country—My tame hare—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden—Pruning—Framing—Greenhouse—Sowing of flower-seeds—The country preferable to the town even in the winter—Reasons why it is deserted at that season—Ruinous effects of gaming, and of expensive improvement—Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

As one who, long in thickets and in brakes
Entangled, winds now this way and now that
His devious course uncertain, seeking home;
Or having long in miry ways been foil'd
And sore discomfited, from slough to slough
Plunging, and half-despairing of escape,

If chance at length he finds a greensward smooth
And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,
He cherups brisk his ear-erecting steed,
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease;
So I, designing other themes, and call'd
To adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,
To tell its slumbers and to paint its dreams,
Have rambled wide. In country, city, seat
Of academic fame, (howe'er deserved,)
Long held and scarcely disengaged at last.
But now with pleasant pace a cleanlier road
I mean to tread. I feel myself at large,
Courageous, and refresh'd for future toil,
If toil awaits me, or if dangers new.
Since pulpits fail, and sounding boards reflect
Most part an empty ineffectual sound,
What chance that I, to fame so little known,
Nor conversant with men or manners much,
Should speak to purpose, or with better hope
Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far
For me, enamour'd of sequester'd scenes,
And charm'd with rural beauty, to repose
Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
My languid limbs when summer sears the plains,
Or when rough winter rages, on the soft
And shelter'd Sofa, while the nitrous air
Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth;
There, undisturb'd by Folly, and apprised,
How great the danger of disturbing her,
To muse in silence, or at least confine
Remarks that gall so many, to the few
My partners in retreat. Disgust conceal'd
Is ofttimes proof of wisdom, when the fault
Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach.
Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has survived the Fall!
Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure.
Or tasting, long enjoy thee, too infirm
Or too incautious to preserve thy sweets
Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup.
Thou art the nurse of virtue. In thine arms
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again.
Thou art not known where pleasure is adored,
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm
Of Novelty, her fickle frail support;

For thou art meek and constant, hating change,
And finding in the calm of truth-tried love
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.
Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown,
Till prostitution elbows us aside
In all our crowded streets, and senates seem
Convened for purposes of empire less,
Than to release the adulteress from her bond.
The adulteress! what a theme for angry verse!
What provocation to the indignant heart
That feels for injured love! but I disdain
The nauseous task to paint her as she is,
Cruel, abandon'd, glorying in her shame.
No. Let her pass, and charioted along
In guilty splendour, shake the public ways;
The frequency of crimes has wash'd them white;
And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,
Whom matrons now of character unsmirch'd,
And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.
Virtue and vice had boundaries in old time,
Not to be pass'd; and she that had renounced
Her sex's honour, was renounced herself
By all that prized it; not for prudery's sake,
But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.
'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waif,
Desirous to return, and not received;
But was a wholesome rigour in the main,
And taught the unblemish'd to preserve with care
That purity, whose loss was loss of all.
Men too were nice in honour in those days,
And judged offenders well. Then he that sharp'd,
And pocketed a prize by fraud obtain'd,
Was mark'd and shunn'd as odious. He that sold
His country, or was slack when she required
His every nerve in action and at stretch,
Paid with the blood that he had basely spared
The price of his default. But now, yes, now,
We are become so candid and so fair,
So liberal in construction, and so rich
In Christian charity, (good-natured age!)
That they are safe, sinners of either sex,
Transgress what laws they may. Well dress'd, well bred,
Well equipaged, is ticket good enough
To pass us readily through every door.
Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,
(And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet,)
May claim this merit still—that she admits

The worth of what she mimics with such care,
And thus gives virtue indirect applause;
But she has burn'd her mask, not needed here,
Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts
And specious semblances have lost their use.
  I was a stricken deer that left the herd
Long since; with many an arrow deep infix'd
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by One who had Himself
Been hurt by the archers. In His side He bore,
And in His hands and feet, the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and heal'd and bade me live.
Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene;
With few associates, and not wishing more.
Here much I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once, and others of a life to come.
I see that all are wanderers, gone astray
Each in his own delusions; they are lost
In chace of fancied happiness, still woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream ensues,
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed. Rings the world
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay
As if created only like the fly,
That spreads his motley wings in the eye of noon,
To sport their season, and be seen no more.
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats
Of heroes little known, and call the rant
A history: describe the man, of whom
His own coevals took but little note,
And paint his person, character, and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein
In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,
The threads of politic and shrewd design
That ran through all his purposes, and charge
His mind with meanings that he never had.
Or having, kept conceal'd. Some drill and bore

The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn
That He who made it, and reveal'd its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
Some more acute, and more industrious still,
Contrive creation; travel nature up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
And tell us whence the stars; why some are fix'd,
And planetary some; what gave them first
Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light.
Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants, each claiming truth,
And truth disclaiming both: and thus they spend
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws
To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.
Is't not a pity now, that tickling rheums
Should ever tease the lungs and blear the sight
Of oracles like these? Great pity too,
That having wielded the elements, and built
A thousand systems, each in his own way,
They should go out in fume and be forgot?
Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they
But frantic who thus spend it? all for smoke,—
Eternity for bubbles proves at last
A senseless bargain. When I see such games
Play'd by the creatures of a Power who swears
That He will judge the earth, and call the fool
To a sharp reckoning that has lived in vain;
And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,
And prove it in the infallible result
So hollow and so false,—I feel my heart
Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
If this be learning, most of all deceived.
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps
While thoughtful man is plausibly amused.
Defend me therefore, common sense, say I,
From reveries so airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up!
'Twere well, says one sage erudite, profound,
Terribly arch'd and aquiline his nose,
And overbuilt with most impending brows—
'Twere well, could you permit the world to live
As the world pleases. What's the world to you?
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk,
As sweet as charity, from human breasts.
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,

And exercise all functions of a man.
How then should I and any man that lives
Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,
Take of the crimson stream meandering there,
And catechise it well. Apply your glass,
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own: and if it be,
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common Maker bound me to the kind?
True; I am no proficient, I confess,
In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,
And bid them hide themselves in earth beneath;
I cannot analyse the air, nor catch
The parallax of yonder luminous point
That seems half quench'd in the immense abyss;
Such powers I boast not—neither can I rest
A silent witness of the headlong rage
Or heedless folly by which thousands die,
Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine.
God never meant that man should scale the heavens
By strides of human wisdom. In His works,
Though wondrous, He commands us in His Word
To seek Him rather where His mercy shines.
The mind indeed, enlighten'd from above,
Views Him in all; ascribes to the grand cause
The grand effect; acknowledges with joy
His manner, and with rapture tastes His style.
But never yet did philosophic tube,
That brings the planets home into the eye
Of observation, and discovers, else
Not visible, His family of worlds,
Discover Him that rules them: such a veil
Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,
And dark in things divine. Full often too
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn
Of nature, overlooks her Author more;
From instrumental causes proud to draw
Conclusions retrograde, and mad mistake.
But if His Word once teach us, shoot a ray
Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal
Truths undiscern'd but by that holy light,
Then all is plain. Philosophy baptized
In the pure fountain of eternal love
Has eyes indeed; and viewing all she sees,
As meant to indicate a God to man,

Gives Him his praise, and forfeits not her own.
Learning has borne such fruit in other days
On all her branches: piety has found
Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer
Has flow'd from lips wet with Castalian dews.
Such was thy wisdom, Newton, childlike sage!
Sagacious reader of the works of God,
And in His Word sagacious. Such too thine,
Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
And fed on manna. And such thine, in whom
Our British Themis gloried with just cause,
Immortal Hale! for deep discernment praised,
And sound integrity not more, than famed
For sanctity of manners undefiled.
All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades
Like the fair flower dishevell'd in the wind;
Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream;
The man we celebrate must find a tomb,
And we that worship him, ignoble graves.
Nothing is proof against the general curse
Of vanity, that seizes all below.
The only amaranthine flower on earth
Is virtue; the only lasting treasure, truth.
But what is truth? 'Twas Pilate's question put
To Truth itself, that deign'd him no reply.
And wherefore? will not God impart His light
To them that ask it?—Freely—'tis His joy,
His glory, and His nature to impart.
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.
What's that which brings contempt upon a book,
And him who writes it, though the style be neat,
The method clear, and argument exact?
That makes a minister in holy things
The joy of many, and the dread of more,
His name a theme for praise and for reproach?
That while it gives us worth in God's account,
Depreciates and undoes us in our own?
What pearl is it that rich men cannot buy,
That learning is too proud to gather up,
But which the poor, and the despised of all
Seek and obtain, and often find unsought?
Tell me, and I will tell thee what is truth.
O friendly to the best pursuits of man,
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domestic life in rural pleasure pass'd!
Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets,
Though many boast thy favours, and affect

To understand and choose thee for their own.
But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,
Even as his first progenitor, and quits,
Though placed in Paradise, (for earth has still
Some traces of her youthful beauty left,)
Substantial happiness for transient joy.
Scenes form'd for contemplation, and to nurse
The growing seeds of wisdom; that suggest
By every pleasing image they present,
Reflections such as meliorate the heart,
Compose the passions, and exalt the mind;
Scenes such as these, 'tis his supreme delight
To fill with riot, and defile with blood.
Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes
We persecute, annihilate the tribes
That draw the sportsman over hill and dale
Fearless, and wrapt away from all his cares;
Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,
Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye;
Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song
Be quell'd in all our summer-months' retreats;
How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,
Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,
Would find them hideous nurseries of the spleen,
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town!
They love the country, and none else, who seek
For their own sake, its silence and its shade;
Delights which who would leave, that has a heart
Susceptible of pity, or a mind
Cultured and capable of sober thought,
For all the savage din of the swift pack,
And clamours of the field? Detested sport,
That owes its pleasures to another's pain,
That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued
With eloquence that agonies inspire
Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs!
Vain tears, alas! and sighs that never find
A corresponding tone in jovial souls.
Well,—one at least is safe. One shelter'd hare
Has never heard the sanguinary yell
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
Whom ten long years' experience of my care
Has made at last familiar, she has lost
Much of her vigilant instinctive dread,
Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.
Yes—thou mayst eat thy bread, and lick the hand

That feeds thee; thou mayst frolic on the floor
At evening, and at night retire secure
To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarm'd;
For I have gained thy confidence, have pledged
All that is human in me to protect
Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.
If I survive thee I will dig thy grave;
And when I place thee in it, sighing say,
I knew at least one hare that had a friend.
How various his employments, whom the world
Calls idle, and who justly in return
Esteems that busy world an idler too!
Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,
Delightful industry enjoy'd at home,
And Nature in her cultivated trim
Dress'd to his taste, inviting him abroad—
Can he want occupation who has these?
Will he be idle who has much to enjoy?
Me, therefore, studious of laborious ease,
Not slothful, happy to deceive the time,
Not waste it, and aware that human life
Is but a loan to be repaid with use,
When He shall call his debtors to account,
From whom are all our blessings, business finds
Even here, while sedulous I seek to improve,
At least neglect not, or leave unemploy'd
The mind He gave me; driving it though slack
Too oft, and much impeded in its work
By causes not to be divulged in vain,
To its just point—the service of mankind.
He that attends to his interior self;
That has a heart and keeps it; has a mind
That hungers and supplies it; and who seeks
A social, not a dissipated life,
Has business; feels himself engaged to achieve
No unimportant, though a silent task.
A life all turbulence and noise may seem,
To him that leads it, wise and to be praised;
But wisdom is a pearl with most success
Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.
He that is ever occupied in storms,
Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,
Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.
The morning finds the self-sequester'd man
Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.
Whether inclement seasons recommend
His warm but simple home, where he enjoys,
With her who shares his pleasures and his heart,

Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph
Which neatly she prepares; then to his book
Well chosen, and not sullenly perused
In selfish silence, but imparted oft
As ought occurs that she may smile to hear,
Or turn to nourishment digested well.
Or if the garden with its many cares,
All well repaid, demand him, he attends
The welcome call, conscious how much the hand
Of lubbard Labour needs his watchful eye,
Oft loitering lazily if not o'erseen,
Or misapplying his unskilful strength.
Nor does he govern only or direct,
But much performs himself; no works indeed
That ask robust tough sinews bred to toil;
Servile employ,—but such as may amuse,
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.
Proud of his well spread walls, he views his trees
That meet, no barren interval between,
With pleasure more than even their fruits afford,
Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel;
These therefore are his own peculiar charge,
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,
Distemper'd, or has lost prolific powers,
Impair'd by age, his unrelenting hand
Dooms to the knife: nor does he spare the soft
And succulent that feeds its giant growth,
But barren, at the expense of neighbouring twigs
Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick
With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left
That may disgrace his art, or disappoint
Large expectation, he disposes neat
At measured distances, that air and sun,
Admitted freely, may afford their aid,
And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.
Hence Summer has her riches, Autumn hence,
And hence even Winter fills his wither'd hand
With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own.*
Fair recompense of labour well bestow'd,
And wise precaution, which a clime so rude
Makes needful still, whose Spring is but the child
Of churlish winter, in her froward moods
Discovering much the temper of her sire.
For oft, as if in her the stream of mild

* Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma.—VIRGIL.

Maternal nature had reversed its course,
She brings her infants forth with many smiles,
But once deliver'd, kills them with a frown.
He therefore, timely warn'd, himself supplies
Her want of care, screening and keeping warm
The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep
His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft
As the sun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,
The fence withdrawn, he gives them every beam,
And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.
   To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,
So grateful to the palate, and when rare
So coveted, else base and disesteem'd,—
Food for the vulgar merely,—is an art
That toiling ages have but just matured,
And at this moment unessay'd in song.
Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice long since,
Their eulogy; those sang the Mantuan bard,
And these the Grecian, in ennobling strains;
And in thy numbers, Phillips, shines for aye
The solitary Shilling.* Pardon then,
Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame!
The ambition of one meaner far, whose powers,
Presuming an attempt not less sublime,
Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste
Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,
A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.
   The stable yields a stercoraceous heap,
Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,
And potent to resist the freezing blast:
For ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf
Deciduous, when now November dark
Checks vegetation in the torpid plant
Exposed to his cold breath, the task begins.
Warily therefore, and with prudent heed,
He seeks a favour'd spot; that where he builds
The agglomerated pile, his frame may front
The sun's meridian disk, and at the back
Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge
Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread
Dry fern or litter'd hay, that may imbibe
The ascending damps; then leisurely impose,
And lightly shaking it with agile hand
From the full fork, the saturated straw.
What longest binds the closest, forms secure

* "The Splendid Shilling" was a burlesque poem published by Phillips in 1703.

The shapely side, that as it rises takes,
By just degrees, an over-hanging breadth,
Sheltering the base with its projected eaves.
The uplifted frame compact at every joint,
And overlaid with clear translucent glass,
He settles next upon the sloping mount,
Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure
From the dash'd pane the deluge as it falls:
He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.
Thrice must the voluble and restless earth
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,
Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass
Diffused, attain the surface: when behold!
A pestilent and most corrosive steam,
Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast,
And fast condensed upon the dewy sash,
Asks egress; which obtain'd, the overcharged
And drench'd conservatory breathes abroad,
In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank;
And purified, rejoices to have lost
Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage
The impatient fervour which it first conceives
Within its reeking bosom, threatening death
To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.
Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft
The way to glory by miscarriage foul,
Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch
The auspicious moment, when the temper'd heat,
Friendly to vital motion, may afford
Soft fermentation, and invite the seed.
The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,
And glossy, he commits to pots of size
Diminutive, well filled with well-prepared
And fruitful soil, that has been treasured long
And drank no moisture from the dripping clouds:
These on the warm and genial earth that hides
The smoking manure, and o'erspreads it all,
He places lightly, and as time subdues
The rage of fermentation, plunges deep
In the soft medium, till they stand immersed.
Then rise the tender germs, upstarting quick
And spreading wide their spongy lobes, at first
Pale, wan, and livid, but assuming soon,
If fann'd by balmy and nutritious air,
Strain'd through the friendly mats, a vivid green.
Two leaves produced, two rough indented leaves,
Cautious he pinches from the second stalk
A pimple, that portends a future sprout,

Each opening blossom, freely breathes abroad
Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.
So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,
All healthful, are the employs of rural life,
Reiterated as the wheel of time
Runs round, still ending, and beginning still.
Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll
That softly swell'd and gaily dress'd, appears
A flowery island, from the dark green lawn
Emerging, must be deem'd a labour due
To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.
Here also grateful mixture of well-match'd
And sorted hues, (each giving each relief,
And by contrasted beauty shining more,)
Is needful. Strength may wield the ponderous spade,
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home,
But elegance, chief grace the garden shews,
And most attractive, is the fair result
Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind.
Without it, all is Gothic as the scene
To which the insipid citizen resorts
Near yonder heath; where industry misspent,
But proud of his uncouth ill-chosen task,
Has made a heaven on earth; with suns and moons
Of close ramm'd stones has charged the encumber'd soil,
And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.
He therefore who would see his flowers disposed
Sightly and in just order, ere he gives
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds,
Forecasts the future whole; that when the scene
Shall break into its preconceived display,
Each for itself, and all as with one voice
Conspiring, may attest his bright design.
Nor even then, dismissing as perform'd
His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.
Few self-supported flowers endure the wind
Uninjured, but expect the upholding aid
Of the smooth shaven prop, and neatly tied,
Are wedded thus like beauty to old age,
For interest sake, the living to the dead.
Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far-diffused
And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,
Like virtue, thriving most where little seen.
Some, more aspiring, catch the neighbour shrub
With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,
Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.

All hate the rank society of weeds,
Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust
The impoverish'd earth; an overbearing race,
That like the multitude, made faction-mad,
Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.
Oh, blest seclusion from a jarring world,
Which he, thus occupied, enjoys! Retreat
Cannot indeed to guilty man restore
Lost innocence, or cancel follies past;
But it has peace, and much secures the mind
From all assaults of evil, proving still
A faithful barrier, not o'erleap'd with ease
By vicious custom, raging uncontroll'd
Abroad, and desolating public life.
When fierce temptation, seconded within
By traitor appetite, and arm'd with darts
Temper'd in hell, invades the throbbing breast,
To combat may be glorious, and success
Perhaps may crown us; but to fly is safe.
Had I the choice of sublunary good,
What could I wish, that I possess not here?
Health, leisure, means to improve it, friendship, peace;
No loose or wanton, though a wandering muse,
And constant occupation without care.
Thus blest, I draw a picture of that bliss;
Hopeless indeed that dissipated minds,
And profligate abusers of a world
Created fair so much in vain for them,
Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe,
Allured by my report: but sure no less
That, self-condemn'd, they must neglect the prize,
And what they will not taste must yet approve.
What we admire we praise; and when we praise,
Advance it into notice, that its worth
Acknowledged, others may admire it too.
I therefore recommend, though at the risk
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,
The cause of piety and sacred truth,
And virtue, and those scenes which God ordain'd
Should best secure them and promote them most;
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoy'd.
Pure is the nymph, though liberal of her smiles,
And chaste, though unconfined, whom I extol·
Not as the prince in Shushan, when he call'd,
Vainglorious of her charms, his Vashti forth
To grace the full pavilion. His design
Was but to boast his own peculiar good,

Which all might view with envy, none partake.
My charmer is not mine alone; my sweets,
And she that sweetens all my bitters too,
Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form
And lineaments divine I trace a hand
That errs not, and find raptures still renew'd,
Is free to all men, universal prize.
Strange that so fair a creature should yet want
Admirers, and be destined to divide
With meaner objects even the few she finds.
Stripp'd of her ornaments, her leaves and flowers,
She loses all her influence. Cities then
Attract us, and neglected nature pines,
Abandon'd, as unworthy of our love.
But are not wholesome airs, though unperfumed
By roses, and clear suns though scarcely felt,
And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure
From clamour, and whose very silence charms,
To be preferr'd to smoke, to the eclipse
That metropolitan volcanoes make,
Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long,
And to the stir of commerce, driving slow,
And thundering loud, with his ten thousand wheels?
They would be, were not madness in the head,
And folly in the heart; were England now
What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,
And undebauch'd. But we have bid farewell
To all the virtues of those better days,
And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once
Knew their own masters, and laborious hinds,
That had survived the father, served the son.
Now the legitimate and rightful lord
Is but a transient guest, newly arrived,
And soon to be supplanted. He that saw
His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,
Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price
To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.
Estates are landscapes, gazed upon awhile,
Then advertised, and auctioneer'd away.
The country starves, and they that feed the o'ercharged
And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,
By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.
The wings that waft our riches out of sight
Grow on the gamester's elbows, and the alert
And nimble motion of those restless joints,
That never tire, soon fans them all away.
Improvement too, the idol of the age,
Is fed with many a victim. Lo! he comes,—

The omnipotent magician, Brown,* appears.
Down falls the venerable pile, the abode
Of our forefathers, a grave whisker'd race,
But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,
But in a distant spot; where more exposed,
It may enjoy the advantage of the north,
And aguish east, till time shall have transform'd
Those naked acres to a sheltering grove.
He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn,
Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise,
And streams, as if created for his use,
Pursue the track of his directing wand,
Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,
Now murmuring soft, now roaring in cascades,
Even as he bids. The enraptured owner smiles.
'Tis finish'd! and yet, finish'd as it seems,
Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could shew,
A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.
Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth,
He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplish'd plan
That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day
Labour'd, and many a night pursued in dreams,
Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the heaven
He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy.
And now perhaps the glorious hour is come,
When having no stake left, no pledge to endear
Her interests, or that gives her sacred cause
A moment's operation on his love,
He burns with most intense and flagant zeal
To serve his country. Ministerial grace
Deals him out money from the public chest;
Or if that mine be shut, some private purse
Supplies his need with an usurious loan,
To be refunded duly, when his vote,
Well managed, shall have earn'd its worthy price.
Oh innocent, compared with arts like these,
Crape and cock'd pistol, and the whistling ball
Sent through the traveller's temples! He that finds
One drop of Heaven's sweet mercy in his cup,
Can dig, beg, rot, and perish well content,
So he may wrap himself in honest rags
At his last gasp; but could not for a world
Fish up his dirty and dependent bread

* Lancelot Brown, a famous landscape and ornamental gardener. He was born in 1715, and died in 1773. He had the nickname of "Capability Brown" given him, from his frequent use of that word.

From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,
Sordid and sickening at his own success.
Ambition, avarice, penury incurr'd
By endless riot, vanity, the lust
Of pleasure and variety, despatch
As duly as the swallows disappear,
The world of wandering knights and squires to town.
London ingulfs them all. The shark is there,
And the shark's prey; the spendthrift and the leech
That sucks him. There the sycophant, and he
Who, with bareheaded and obsequious bows,
Begs a warm office, doom'd to a cold jail,
And groat per diem, if his patron frown.
The levee swarms, as if, in golden pomp,
Were character'd on every statesman's door,
"BATTER'D AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDED HERE."
These are the charms that sully and eclipse
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe
That lean hard-handed Poverty inflicts,
The hope of better things, the chance to win,
The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,
That at the sound of Winter's hoary wing,
Unpeople all our counties, of such herds
Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose
And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast
And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.
Oh thou, resort and mart of all the earth,
Chequer'd with all complexions of mankind,
And spotted with all crimes; in which I see
Much that I love, and more that I admire,
And all that I abhor; thou freckled fair,
That pleases and yet shocks me, I can laugh
And I can weep, can hope and can despond,
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee!
Ten righteous would have saved a city once,
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee
That salt preserves thee; more corrupted else,
And therefore more obnoxious at this hour,
Than Sodom in her day had power to be,
For whom God heard his Abraham plead in vain.

BOOK IV.—THE WINTER EVENING.

ARGUMENT.

The post comes in—The newspaper is read—The world contemplated at a distance—Address to winter—The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones—Address to evening—A brown study—Fall of snow in the evening—The waggoner—A poor family piece—The rural thief—Public-houses—The multitude of them censured—The farmer's daughter: what she was; what she is—The simplicity of country manners almost lost—Causes of the change—Desertion of the country by the rich—Neglect of magistrates—The militia principally in fault—The new recruit and his transformation—Reflection on bodies corporate—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

Hark! 'tis the twanging horn! O'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks,
News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge the close-pack'd load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn,
And having dropp'd the expected bag—pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some,
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains,
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But oh the important budget! usher'd in
With such heart-shaking music, who can say
What are its tidings! have our troops awaked?
Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave?*
Is India free? and does she wear her plumed
And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;

* The American war was then taking place.

I burn to set the imprison'd wranglers free,
And give them voice and utterance once again.
Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
Not such his evening, who with shining face
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and squeezed
And bored with elbow points through both his sides,
Outscolds the ranting actor on the stage;
Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,
Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.
This folio of four pages, happy work!
Which not even critics criticise; that holds
Inquisitive attention while I read,
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break;
What is it but a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge
That tempts ambition. On the summit, see,
The seals of office glitter in his eyes;
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them. At his heels,
Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down,
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.
Here rills of oily eloquence in soft
Meanders lubricate the course they take;
The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved
To engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet bashfulness! it claims, at least, this praise;
The dearth of information and good sense,
That it foretells us, always comes to pass.
Cataracts of declamation thunder here,
There forests of no meaning spread the page
In which all comprehension wanders lost;
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there,
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,

Heaven, earth, and ocean plunder'd of their sweets,
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons and city feasts, and favourite airs,
Æthereal journeys, submarine exploits,
And Katerfelto,* with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.
'Tis pleasant through the loopholes of retreat
To peep at such a world; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd;
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates,
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on the uninjured ear.
Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
To some secure and more than mortal height,
That liberates and exempts me from them all.
It turns submitted to my view, turns round
With all its generations; I behold
The tumult, and am still. The sound of war
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me;
Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
And avarice that make man a wolf to man,
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats,
By which he speaks the language of his heart,
And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.
He travels and expatiates, as the bee
From flower to flower, so he from land to land;
The manners, customs, policy of all
Pay contribution to the store he gleans;
He sucks intelligence in every clime,
And spreads the honey of his deep research
At l 's return, a rich repast for me.
He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
Discover countries, with a kindred heart
Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes;
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.
O Winter! ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapp'd in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,

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* Katerfelto was a quack who advertised his own performances, and those of his black cat; heading his advertisements with "Wonders! wonders! wonders!"

But urged by storms along its slippery way;
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art. Thou hold'st the sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning east,
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gathering, at short notice, in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee King of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;
No powder'd pert proficient in the art
Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors
Till the street rings; no stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:
But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,
Follow the nimble finger of the fair;
A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow
With most success when all besides decay.
The poet's or historian's page, by one
Made vocal for the amusement of the rest;
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out;
And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still,
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry; the threaded steel
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.
The volume closed, the customary rites
Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal,
Such as the mistress of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domestic shade,
Enjoy'd, spare feast! a radish and an egg.
Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,

Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth;
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
That made them an intruder on their joys,
Start at His awful name, or deem His praise
A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,
While we retrace with memory's pointing wand,
That calls the past to our exact review,
The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,
The disappointed foe, deliverance found
Unlook'd for, life preserved and peace restored,
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.
Oh evenings worthy of the gods! exclaim'd
The Sabine bard. Oh evenings, I reply,
More to be prized and coveted than yours,
As more illumined, and with nobler truths,
That I and mine, and those we love, enjoy.
Is winter hideous in a garb like this?
Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,
The pent-up breath of an unsavoury throng,
To thaw him into feeling, or the smart
And snappish dialogue that flippant wits
Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?
The self-complacent actor, when he views
(Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house)
The slope of faces from the floor to the roof,
(As if one master spring controll'd them all,)
Relax'd into a universal grin,
Sees not a countenance there that speaks of joy
Half so refined or so sincere as ours.
Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks
That idleness has ever yet contrived
To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain,
To palliate dulness, and give time a shove.
Time as he passes us, has a dove's wing,
Unsoil'd and swift, and of a silken sound;
But the world's time is time in masquerade.
Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged
With motley plumes, and where the peacock shows
His azure eyes, is tinctured black and red
With spots quadrangular of diamond form,
Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,
And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.
What should be, and what was an hourglass once,
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mace
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.

Thus deck'd, he charms a world whom fashion blinds
To his true worth, most pleased when idle most,
Whose only happy are their wasted hours.
Even misses, at whose age their mothers wore
The backstring and the bib, assume the dress
Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school
Of card-devoted time, and night by night
Placed at some vacant corner of the board,
Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.
But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?
As he that travels far, oft turns aside
To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower,
Which seen, delights him not; then coming home,
Describes and prints it, that the world may know
How far he went for what was nothing worth;
So I, with brush in hand and pallet spread
With colours mix'd for a far different use,
Paint cards and dolls, and every idle thing
That fancy finds in her excursive flights.
Come, Evening, once again, season of peace,
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
With matron step slow moving, while the night
Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employ'd
In letting fall the curtain of repose
On bird and beast, the other charged for man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day;
Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing aid,
Like homely featured night, of clustering gems;
A star or two just twinkling on thy brow
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high
With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift:
And whether I devote thy gentle hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
Or twining silken threads round ivory reels,
When they command whom man was born to please;
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.
Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk

Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,
My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
With faint illumination, that uplifts
The shadows to the ceiling, there by fits
Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.
Not undelightful is an hour to me
So spent in parlour twilight; such a gloom
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new theme
Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial powers,
That never feel a stupor, know no pause,
Nor need one; I am conscious, and confess,
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
Me oft has fancy, ludicrous and wild,
Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,
Trees, churches, and strange visages express'd
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gazed, myself creating what I saw.
Nor less amused have I quiescent watch'd
The sooty films that play upon the bars
Pendulous, and foreboding, in the view
Of superstition, prophesying still,
Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach.
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man
Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd and lost.
Thus oft, reclined at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing blast,
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home
The recollected powers, and snapping short
The glassy threads with which the fancy weaves
Her brittle toils, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess, and how the frost,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within!
I saw the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show; the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands, where lately waved
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share;
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each

His favourite herb; while all the leafless groves,
That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue,
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently perform'd
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy shower: the downy flakes
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thickening mantle, and the green
And tender blade that fear'd the chilling blast,
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.
In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at his side,
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguish'd than ourselves, that thus
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
And sympathize with others, suffering more.
Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks
In ponderous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads adhering close
To the clogg'd wheels; and in its sluggish pace
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While every breath, by respiration strong
Forced downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with both
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
Oh happy! and in my account, denied
The sensibility of pain with which
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou.
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.
The learnèd finger never need explore
Thy vigorous pulse; and the unhealthful east,
That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.
Thy day rolls on exempt from household care;

Thy waggon is thy wife; and the poor beasts,
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou appear'st,
Yet show that thou hast mercy, which the great
With needless hurry whirl'd from place to place,
Humane as they would seem, not always show.
 Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
Such claim compassion in a night like this,
And have a friend in every feeling heart.
Warm'd while it lasts, by labour, all day long
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
Ill clad and fed but sparely, time to cool.
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights
Her scanty stock of brushwood, blazing clear,
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
The few small embers left she nurses well,
And while her infant race, with outspread hands,
And crowded knees, sit cowering o'er the sparks,
Retires, content to quake, so they be warm'd.
The man feels least, as more inured than she
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly moved by his severer toil;
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.
The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw
Dangled along at the cold finger's end
Just when the day declined, and the brown loaf
Lodged on the shelf, half eaten, without sauce
Of savoury cheese, or butter costlier still,
Sleep seems their only refuge: for, alas!
Where penury is felt the thought is chain'd,
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few.
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care
Ingenious parsimony takes, but just
Saves the small inventory, bed and stool,
Skillet and old carved chest, from public sale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands, but other boast have none
To soothe their honest pride, that scorns to beg;
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; choosing rather far
A dry but independent crust, hard earn'd,
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office, partial in the work
Of distribution; liberal of their aid
To clamorous importunity in rags,

But ofttimes deaf to suppliants, who would blush
To wear a tatter'd garb however coarse,
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth;
These ask with painful shyness, and refused
Because deserving, silently retire.
But be ye of good courage. Time itself
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase,
And all your numerous progeny, well train'd,
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,
And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want
What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare,
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
I mean the man* who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.
But poverty, with most who whimper forth
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe;
The effect of laziness or sottish waste.
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad
For plunder; much solicitous how best
He may compensate for a day of sloth,
By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.
Woe to the gardener's pale, the farmer's hedge
Plash'd neatly, and secured with driven stakes
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength,
Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil,
An ass's burden, and, when laden most
And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard
The well-stack'd pile of riven logs and roots
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave
Unwrench'd the door, however well secured,
Where chanticleer amidst his harem sleeps
In unsuspecting pomp. Twitch'd from the perch,
He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain,
And loudly wondering at the sudden change.
Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse
Did pity of their sufferings warp aside
His principle, and tempt him into sin
For their support, so destitute. But they
Neglected pine at home, themselves, as more
Exposed than others, with less scruple made
His victims, robb'd of their defenceless all.
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst

* Supposed to be Mr. Smith, the banker, afterwards created Lord Carrington.

Of ruinous ebriety that prompts
His every action, and imbrutes the man.
Oh for a law to noose the villain's neck
Who starves his own; who persecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love.
   Pass where we may, through city or through town,
Village or hamlet, of this merry land,
Though lean and beggar'd, every twentieth pace
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff
Of stale debauch, forth issuing from the styes
That law has licensed, as makes temperance reel.
There sit, involved and lost in curling clouds
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,
The lackey, and the groom; the craftsman there
Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil;
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,
And he that kneads the dough; all loud alike.
All learnèd, and all drunk. The fiddle screams
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wail'd
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard.
Fierce the dispute, whate'er the theme; while she,
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,
Perch'd on the sign-post, holds with even hand
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays
A weight of ignorance, in that, of pride;
And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound
The cheek-distending oath, not to be praised
As ornamental, musical, polite,
Like those which modern senators employ,
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame.
Behold the schools in which plebeian minds,
Once simple, are initiated in arts
Which some may practise with politer grace,
But none with readier skill! 'Tis here they learn
The road that leads from competence and peace
To indigence and rapine; till at last
Society, grown weary of the load,
Shakes her encumber'd lap, and casts them out.
But censure profits little: vain the attempt
To advertise in verse a public pest,
That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds
His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.
The excise is fatten'd with the rich result
Of all this riot; and ten thousand casks
For ever dribbling out their base contents,
Touch'd by the Midas' finger of the state,

Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.
Drink and be mad then; 'tis your country bids;
Gloriously drunk, obey the important call;
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.
Would I had fall'n upon those happier days
That poets celebrate; those golden times
And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings,
And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.
Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts
That felt their virtues: Innocence, it seems,
From courts dismiss'd, found shelter in the groves.
The footsteps of Simplicity, impress'd
Upon the yielding herbage (so they sing)
Then were not all effaced: then speech profane,
And manners profligate, were rarely found,
Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaim'd.
Vain wish! those days were never: airy dreams
Sat for the picture, and the poet's hand,
Imparting substance to an empty shade,
Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.
Grant it: I still must envy them an age
That favour'd such a dream, in days like these
Impossible, when virtue is so scarce,
That to suppose a scene where she presides
Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.
No: we are polish'd now. The rural lass,
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,
Her artless manner, and her neat attire,
So dignified, that she was hardly less
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,
Is seen no more. The character is lost.
Her head, adorn'd with lappets pinn'd aloft,
And ribands streaming gay, superbly raised,
And magnified beyond all human size,
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand
For more than half the tresses it sustains;
Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form
Ill propp'd upon French heels; she might be deem'd
(But that the basket dangling on her arm
Interprets her more truly) of a rank
Too proud for dairy work or sale of eggs.
Expect her soon with footboy at her heels,
No longer blushing for her awkward load,
Her train and her umbrella all her care.

The town has tinged the country; and the stain
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs

Down into scenes still rural; but, alas!
Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now.
Time was when in the pastoral retreat
The unguarded door was safe; men did not watch
To invade another's right, or guard their own.
Then sleep was undisturb'd by fear, unscared
By drunken howlings; and the chilling tale
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.
But farewell now to unsuspicious nights,
And slumbers unalarm'd. Now, ere you sleep,
See that your polish'd arms be primed with care,
And drop the nightbolt; ruffians are abroad;
And the first 'larum of the cock's shrill throat
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear
To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.
Even daylight has its dangers; and the walk
Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once
Of other tenants than melodious birds,
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.
Lamented change! to which full many a cause
Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.
The course of human things from good to ill,
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.
Increase of power begets increase of wealth;
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;
Excess, the scrofulous and itchy plague
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.
The rich, and they that have an arm to check
The license of the lowest in degree,
Desert their office; and themselves, intent
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus
To all the violence of lawless hands
Resign the scenes their presence might protect.
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.
The plump, convivial parson often bears
The magisterial sword in vain, and lays
His reverence and his worship both to rest
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm;
When he should strike, he trembles, and sets free,
Himself enslaved by terror of the band,
The audacious convict, whom he dares not bind.
Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,

He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove
Less dainty than becomes his grave outside
In lucrative concerns. Examine well
His milk-white hand; the palm is hardly clean,—
But here and there an ugly smutch appears.
Foh! 'twas a bribe that left it: he has touch'd
Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,
Wildfowl or venison, and his errand speeds.
But faster far, and more than all the rest,
A noble cause, which none who bears a spark
Of public virtue ever wish'd removed,
Works the deplored and mischievous effect.
'Tis universal soldiership has stabb'd
The heart of merit in the meaner class.
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage
Of those that bear them, in whatever cause,
Seem most at variance with all moral good,
And incompatible with serious thought.
The clown, the child of nature, without guile,
Blest with an infant's ignorance of all
But his own simple pleasures, now and then
A wrestling-match, a foot-race, or a fair,
Is balloted, and trembles at the news:
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears
A bible-oath to be whate'er they please,
To do he knows not what. The task perform'd,
That instant he becomes the sergeant's care,
His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,
Unapt to learn, and form'd of stubborn stuff,
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,
Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well.
He stands erect; his slouch becomes a walk;
He steps right onward, martial in his air,
His form, and movement; is as smart above
As meal and larded locks can make him; wears
His hat, or his plumed helmet, with a grace;
And his three years of heroship expired,
Returns indignant to the slighted plough.
He hates the field, in which no fife or drum
Attends him, drives his cattle to a march,
And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.
'Twere well if his exterior change were all—
But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost
His ignorance and harmless manners too.

To swear, to game, to drink, to show at home,
By lewdness, idleness, and Sabbath breach,
The great proficiency he made abroad;
To astonish and to grieve his gazing friends;
To break some maiden's and his mother's heart;
To be a pest where he was useful once;
Are his sole aim, and all his glory now.
  Man in society is like a flower
Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,
Shine out; there only reach their proper use.
But man, associated and leagued with man
By regal warrant, or self-join'd by bond
For interest sake, or swarming into clans
Beneath one head for purposes of war,
Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound
And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,
Fades rapidly, and, by compression marr'd,
Contracts defilement not to be endured.
Hence charter'd boroughs are such public plagues;
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps
In all their private functions, once combined,
Become a loathsome body, only fit
For dissolution, hurtful to the main.
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin
Against the charities of domestic life,
Incorporated, seem at once to lose
Their nature, and, disclaiming all regard
For mercy and the common rights of man,
Build factories with blood, conducting trade
At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe
Of innocent commercial justice red.
Hence too the field of glory, as the world
Misdeems it, dazzled by its bright array,
With all its majesty of thundering pomp,
Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,
Is but a school where thoughtlessness is taught
On principle, where foppery atones
For folly, gallantry for every vice.
  But slighted as it is, and by the great
Abandon'd, and, which still I more regret,
Infected with the manners and the modes
It knew not once, the country wins me still.
I never fram'd a wish, or form'd a plan,
That flatter'd me with hopes of earthly bliss,
But there I laid the scene. There early stray'd
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice
Had found me, or the hope of being free

My very dreams were rural, rural too
The firstborn efforts of my youthful muse,
Sportive, and jingling her poetic bells
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe
Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,
The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech.
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:
New to my taste, his Paradise surpass'd
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue
To speak its excellence: I danced for joy.
I marvell'd much that, at so ripe an age
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first
Engaged my wonder, and admiring still,
And still admiring, with regret supposed
The joy half lost because not sooner found.
Thee too, (enamour'd of the life I loved,
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit
Determined, and possessing it at last
With transports such as favour'd lovers feel,)
I studied, prized, and wish'd that I had known,
Ingenious Cowley! and though now, reclaim'd
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools:
I still revere thee, courtly though retired,
Though stretch'd at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers,
Not unemploy'd, and finding rich amends
For a lost world in solitude and verse.
'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound, man,
Infused at the creation of the kind.
And though the Almighty Maker has throughout
Discriminated each from each, by strokes
And touches of His hand, with so much art
Diversified, that two were never found
Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,
That all discern a beauty in His works,
And all can taste them: minds that have been form'd
And tutor'd, with a relish more exact,
But none without some relish, none unmoved.
It is a flame that dies not even there,
Where nothing feeds it: neither business, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city life,
Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms, quench it or abate.

The villas with which London stands begirt,
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,
Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air,
The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
Even in the stifling bosom of the town,
A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms
That soothe the rich possessor; much consoled
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
That nature lives; that sight-refreshing green
Is still the livery she delights to wear,
Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.
What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,
The prouder sashes fronted with a range
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,
The Frenchman's darling?* are they not all proofs
That man, immured in cities, still retains
His inborn inextinguishable thirst
Of rural scenes, compensating his loss
By supplemental shifts, the best he may?
The most unfurnish'd with the means of life,
And they that never pass their brick-wall bounds
To range the fields and treat their lungs with air,
Yet feel the burning instinct; over head
Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick,
And water'd duly. There the pitcher stands
A fragment, and the spoutless teapot there;
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets
The country, with what ardour he contrives
A peep at nature, when he can no more.
 Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys
And harmless pleasures, in the throng'd abode
Of multitudes unknown! hail, rural life!
Address himself who will to the pursuit
Of honours, or emolument, or fame,
I shall not add myself to such a chase,
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.
Some must be great. Great offices will have
Great talents: and God gives to every man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordain'd to fill.
To the deliverer of an injured land

* Mignionette.

He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, a heart
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs;
To monarchs dignity; to judges sense;
To artists ingenuity and skill;
To me an unambitious mind, content
In the low vale of life, that early felt
A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long
Found here that leisure and that ease I wish'd.

BOOK V.—THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

ARGUMENT.

A frosty morning—The foddering of cattle—The woodman and his dog—The poultry—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall—The Empress of Russia's palace of ice—Amusements of monarchs—War, one of them—Wars, whence—And whence monarchy—The evils of it—English and French loyalty contrasted—The Bastille, and a prisoner there — Liberty the chief recommendation of this country — Modern patriotism questionable, and why—The perishable nature of the best human institutions—Spiritual liberty not perishable—The slavish state of man by nature—Deliver him, Deist, if you can—Grace must do it—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated—Their different treatment—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free—His relish of the works of God—Address to the Creator.

'Tis morning; and the sun with ruddy orb
Ascending fires the horizon: while the clouds
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
In spite of gravity, and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular proportion'd limb
Transform'd to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
As they design'd to mock me, at my side
Take step for step; and as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plaster'd wall,
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents,
And coarser grass upspearing o'er the rest,

Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.
The cattle mourn in corners where the fence
Screens them, and seem half-petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder, not like hungering man
Fretful if unsupplied, but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out the accustom'd load,
Deep plunging, and again deep plunging oft,
His broad keen knife into the solid mass;
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away: no needless care
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher, and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now with many a frisk
Wide scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,
But now and then with pressure of his thumb
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
Now from the roost, or from the neighbouring pale,
Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam
Of smiling day, they gossip'd side by side,
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
The feather'd tribes domestic. Half on wing,
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves
To seize the fair occasion. Well they eye
The scatter'd grain, and thievishly resolved
To escape the impending famine, often scared
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,

Or shed impervious to the blast. Resign'd
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes
His wonted strut, and wading at their head
With well-consider'd steps, seems to resent
His alter'd gait and stateliness retrench'd.
How find the myriads, that in summer cheer
The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs,
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now?
Earth yields them nought: the imprison'd worm is safe
Beneath the frozen clod; all seeds of herbs
Lie cover'd close, and berry-bearing thorns
That feed the thrush, (whatever some suppose,)
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.
The long protracted rigour of the year
Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,
As instinct prompts, self-buried ere they die.
The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,
Where neither grub nor root nor earth-nut now
Repays their labour more; and perch'd aloft
By the way-side, or stalking in the path,
Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,
Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.
The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,
Indurated and fix'd, the snowy weight
Lies undissolved; while silently beneath,
And unperceived, the current steals away.
Not so, where scornful of a check it leaps
The mill-dam, dashes on the restless wheel,
And wantons in the pebbly gulf below:
No frost can bind it there; its utmost force
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.
And see where it has hung the embroider'd banks
With forms so various, that no powers of art,
The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene!
Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high
(Fantastic misarrangement!) on the roof
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees
And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops
That trickle down the branches, fast congeal'd,
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,
And prop the pile they but adorn'd before.
Here grotto within grotto safe defies
The sunbeam: there emboss'd and fretted wild,
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes

Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain
The likeness of some object seen before.
Thus nature works as if to mock at art,
And in defiance of her rival powers;
By these fortuitous and random strokes
Performing such inimitable feats,
As she with all her rules can never reach.
Less worthy of applause, though more admired,
Because a novelty, the work of man,
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ !*
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,
The wonder of the north. No forest fell
When thou wouldst build; no quarry sent its stores
To enrich thy walls; but thou didst hew the floods,
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.
In such a palace Aristæus found
Cyrene,† when he bore the plaintive tale
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear:
In such a palace poetry might place
The armoury of winter; where his troops,
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,
And snow that often blinds the traveller's course,
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.
Silently as a dream the fabric rose;
No sound of hammer or of saw was there.
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts
Were soon conjoin'd, nor other cement ask'd
Than water interfused to make them one.
Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,
Illumined every side; a watery light
Gleam'd through the clear transparency, that seem'd
Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen
From heaven to earth, of lambent flame serene.
So stood the brittle prodigy; though smooth
And slippery the materials, yet frostbound
Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,
That royal residence might well befit,
For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths
Of flowers, that fear'd no enemy but warmth,
Blush'd on the panels. Mirror needed none

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* Anna. This Empress constructed a palace of ice on the bank of the Neva in 1740. It lasted from January to March.

† Aristæus, the son of Apollo and Cyrene a water nymph, having been in a measure the cause of Eurydice's death, was punished by the loss of all his bees. He appealed for help to his mother, weeping on the banks of the Peneus, and was allowed to descend beneath the waves, where he found Cyrene in a "watery palace," to which the poet compares the ice palace of the Empress.

Where all was vitreous; but in order due
Convivial table and commodious seat
(What seem'd at least commodious seat) were there,
Sofa and couch and high-built throne august.
The same lubricity was found in all,
And all was moist to the warm touch; a scene
Of evanescent glory, once a stream,
And soon to slide into a stream again.
Alas! 'twas but a mortifying stroke
Of undesigned severity, that glanced
(Made by a monarch) on her own estate,
On human grandeur and the courts of kings.
'Twas transient in its nature, as in show
'Twas durable; as worthless, as it seem'd
Intrinsically precious; to the foot
Treacherous and false; it smiled, and it was cold.
Great princes have great playthings. Some have play'd
At hewing mountains into men, and some
At building human wonders mountain high.
Some have amused the dull sad years of life,
Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad,
With schemes of monumental fame; and sought
By pyramids and mausolean pomp,
Short-lived themselves, to immortalise their bones.
Some seek diversion in the tented field,
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.
But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise,
Kings would not play at. Nations would do well
To extort their truncheons from the puny hands
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds
Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil,
Because men suffer it, their toy the world.
When Babel was confounded, and the great
Confederacy of projectors wild and vain
Was split into diversity of tongues,
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,
These to the upland, to the valley those,
God drave asunder, and assign'd their lot
To all the nations. Ample was the boon
He gave them, in its distribution fair
And equal, and He bade them dwell in peace.
Peace was awhile their care: they plough'd and sow'd,
And reap'd their plenty without grudge or strife.
But violence can never longer sleep
Than human passions please. In every heart
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war;
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.
Cain had already shed a brother's blood;

The deluge wash'd it out; but left unquench'd
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.
Soon, by a righteous judgment, in the line
Of his descending progeny was found
The first artificer of death; the shrewd
Contriver who first sweated at the forge,
And forced the blunt and yet unbloodied steel
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.
Him, Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,
The sword and falchion their inventor claim,
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.*
His art survived the waters; and ere long,
When man was multiplied and spread abroad
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call
These meadows and that range of hills his own,
The tasted sweets of property begat
Desire of more; and industry in some
To improve and cultivate their just demesne,
Made others covet what they saw so fair.
Thus war began on earth: these fought for spoil,
And those in self-defence. Savage at first
The onset, and irregular. At length
One eminent above the rest, for strength,
For stratagem, or courage, or for all,
Was chosen leader; him they served in war,
And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds
Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare?
Or who so worthy to control themselves
As he whose prowess had subdued their foes?
Thus war affording field for the display
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,
Which have their exigencies too, and call
For skill in government, at length made king.
King was a name too proud for man to wear
With modesty and meekness; and the crown,
So dazzling in their eyes who set it on,
Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound.
It is the abject property of most,
That being parcel of the common mass,
And destitute of means to raise themselves,
They sink and settle lower than they need.
They know not what it is to feel within
A comprehensive faculty that grasps
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields,
Almost without an effort, plans too vast
For their conception, which they cannot move.

* Gen. iv. 22.

Conscious of impotence, they soon grow drunk
With gazing, when they see an able man
Step forth to notice; and besotted thus,
Build him a pedestal, and say, "Stand there,
And be our admiration and our praise."
They roll themselves before him in the dust,
Then most deserving in their own account
When most extravagant in his applause,
As if exalting him they raised themselves.
Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound
And sober judgment, that he is but man,
They demi-deify and fume him so,
That in due season he forgets it too.
Inflated and astrut with self-conceit,
He gulps the windy diet, and ere long,
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks
The world was made in vain, if not for him.
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges born
To bear his burdens; drawing in his gears
And sweating in his service, his caprice
Becomes the soul that animates them all.
He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,
Spent in the purchase of renown for him,
An easy reckoning, and they think the same.
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings
Were burnish'd into heroes, and became
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp,
Storks among frogs, that have but croak'd and died.
Strange that such folly as lifts bloated man
To eminence fit only for a god,
Should ever drivel out of human lips,
Even in the cradled weakness of the world!
Still stranger much, than when at length mankind
Had reach'd the sinewy firmness of their youth,
And could discriminate and argue well
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear
And quake before the gods themselves had made.
But above measure strange, that neither proof
Of sad experience, nor examples set
By some whose patriot virtue has prevail'd,
Can even now, when they are grown mature
In wisdom, and with philosophic deeps
Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest!
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone
To reverence what is ancient, and can plead
A course of long observance for its use,
That even servitude, the worst of ills.

Because deliver'd down from sire to son,
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.
But is it fit, or can it it bear the shock
Of rational discussion, that a man,
Compounded and made up like other men
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust
And folly in as ample measure meet
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,
Should be a despot absolute, and boast
Himself the only freeman of his land?
Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,
Wage war, with any or with no pretence
Of provocation given or wrong sustain'd,
And force the beggarly last doit, by means
That his own humour dictates, from the clutch
Of poverty, that thus he may procure
His thousands, weary of penurious life,
A splendid opportunity to die?
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees
In politic convention) put your trust
In the shadow of a bramble, and reclined
In fancied peace beneath its dangerous branch,
Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,
Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs
Your self-denying zeal that holds it good
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang
His thorns with streamers of continual praise?
We too are friends to loyalty. We love
The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them: him we serve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free:
But recollecting still that he is man,
We trust him not too far. King though he be,
And king in England too, he may be weak,
And vain enough to be ambitious still,
May exercise amiss his proper powers,
Or covet more than freemen choose to grant:
Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,
To administer, to guard, to adorn the state,
But not to warp or change it. We are his,
To serve him nobly in the common cause,
True to the death, but not to be his slaves.
Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love
Of kings, between your loyalty and ours:
We love the man, the paltry pageant you;
We the chief patron of the commonwealth,
You the regardless author of its woes;

We, for the sake of liberty, a king,
You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.
Our love is principle, and has its root
In reason, is judicious, manly, free;
Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.
Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,
Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,
I would not be a king to be beloved
Causeless, and daub'd with undiscerning praise,
Where love is mere attachment to the throne,
Not to the man who fills it as he ought.
  Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will
Of a superior, he is never free.
Who lives, and is not weary of a life
Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.
The state that strives for liberty, though foil'd,
And forced to abandon what she bravely sought,
Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
And pity for her loss. But that's a cause
Not often unsuccessful; power usurp'd
Is weakness when opposed; conscious of wrong,
'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.
But slaves that once conceive the glowing thought
Of freedom, in that hope itself possess
All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,
The scorn of danger, and united hearts,
The surest presage of the good they seek.*
  Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
To France than all her losses and defeats,
Old or of later date, by sea or land,
Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastille.
Ye horrid towers, the abode of broken hearts,
Ye dungeons, and ye cages of despair,
That monarchs have supplied from age to age
With music such as suits their sovereign ears,
The sighs and groans of miserable men!
There's not an English heart that would not leap
To hear that ye were fall'n at last; to know
That even our enemies, so oft employ'd
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.
For he who values liberty confines

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* The author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.—(C.)

His zeal for her predominance within
No narrow bounds; her cause engages him
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.
There dwell the most forlorn of human kind,
Immured though unaccused, condemn'd untried,
Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.
There, like the visionary emblem seen
By him of Babylon,* life stands a stump,
And filleted about with hoops of brass,
Still lives, though all his pleasant boughs are gone.
To count the hour-bell, and expect no change;
And ever, as the sullen sound is heard,
Still to reflect, that though a joyless note
To him whose moments all have one dull pace,
Ten thousand rovers in the world at large
Account it music; that it summons some
To theatre or jocund feast or ball;
The wearied hireling finds it a release
From labour; and the lover, who has chid
Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke
Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight:—
To fly for refuge from distracting thought
To such amusements as ingenious woe
Contrives, hard shifting and without her tools:—
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,
In staggering types, his predecessor's tale,
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own:—
To turn purveyor to an overgorged
And bloated spider, till the pamper'd pest
Is made familiar, watches his approach,
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend:—
To wear out time in numbering to and fro
The studs that thick emboss his iron door,
Then downward and then upward, then aslant,
And then alternate, with a sickly hope
By dint of change to give his tasteless task
Some relish, till the sum exactly found
In all directions, he begins again:—
Oh comfortless existence! hemm'd around
With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?
That man should thus encroach on fellow man,
Abridge him of his just and native rights,
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold
Upon the endearments of domestic life
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,

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* Nebuchadnezzar.

And doom him for perhaps a heedless word
To barrenness, and solitude, and tears,
Moves indignation, makes the name of king
(Of king whom such prerogative can please)
As dreadful as the Manichean god,*
Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.
'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,
Except what wisdom lays on evil men,
Is evil; hurts the faculties, impedes
Their progress in the road of science; blinds
The eyesight of discovery, and begets
In those that suffer it a sordid mind
Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit
To be the tenant of man's noble form.
Thee therefore still, blameworthy as thou art,
With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed
By public exigence till annual food
Fails for the craving hunger of the state,
Thee I account still happy, and the chief
Among the nations, seeing thou art free!
My native nook of earth! Thy clime is rude,
Replete with vapours, and disposes much
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine;
Thine unadulterate manners are less soft
And plausible than social life requires,
And thou hast need of discipline and art
To give thee what politer France receives
From nature's bounty—that humane address
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,
Or flush'd with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl;
Yet being free I love thee: for the sake
Of that one feature can be well content,
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,
To seek no sublunary rest beside.
But once enslaved, farewell! I could endure
Chains nowhere patiently; and chains at home,
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.
Then what were left of roughness in the grain
Of British natures, wanting its excuse
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust

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* The power of Evil. Manes, the founder of the sect called Manicheans, taught that there were two gods of equal power—the one good, the other evil. This heresy arose in the third century. Arimanes was worshipped from fear. See Saracen's song in Scott's "Talisman," chap. i.

And shock me. I should then with double pain
Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime;
And if I must bewail the blessing lost
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,
I would at least bewail it under skies
Milder, among a people less austere,
In scenes which, having never known me free,
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.
Do I forebode impossible events,
And tremble at vain dreams? Heaven grant I may!
But the age of virtuous politics is past,
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.
Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,
And we too wise to trust them. He that takes
Deep in his soft credulity the stamp
Design'd by loud declaimers on the part
Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,
Incurs derision for his easy faith
And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough:
For when was public virtue to be found
Where private was not? Can he love the whole
Who loves no part? He be a nation's friend
Who is, in truth, the friend of no man there?
Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,
Who slights the charities for whose dear sake
That country, if at all, must be beloved?
'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad
For England's glory, seeing it wax pale
And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts
So loose to private duty, that no brain,
Healthful and undisturb'd by factious fumes,
Can dream them trusty to the general weal.
Such were not they of old, whose temper'd blades
Dispersed the shackles of usurp'd control,
And hew'd them link from link. Then Albion's sons
Were sons indeed: they felt a filial heart
Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs,
And shining each in his domestic sphere,
Shone brighter still, once call'd to public view.
'Tis therefore many, whose sequester'd lot
Forbids their interference, looking on,
Anticipate perforce some dire event;
And seeing the old castle of the state,
That promised once more firmness, so assail'd
That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,
Stand motionless, expectants of its fall.
All has its date below; the fatal hour
Was register'd in heaven ere time began.

We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works
Die too: the deep foundations that we lay,
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
We build with what we deem eternal rock;
A distant age asks where the fabric stood;
And in the dust, sifted and search'd in vain,
The indiscoverable secret sleeps.
But there is yet a liberty unsung
By poets, and by senaters unpraised,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers
Of earth and hell confederate take away;
A liberty which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.
'Tis liberty of heart, derived from Heaven,
Bought with His blood who gave it to mankind,
And seal'd with the same token. It is held
By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure
By the unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God. His other gifts
All bear the royal stamp that speaks them His,
And are august, but this transcends them all.
His other works, the visible display
Of all-creating energy and might,
Are grand, no doubt, and worthy of the word
That, finding an interminable space
Unoccupied, has fill'd the void so well,
And made so sparkling what was dark before.
But these are not His glory. Man, 'tis true,
Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,
Might well suppose the Artificer Divine
Meant it eternal, had He not Himself
Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,
And still designing a more glorious far,
Doom'd it as insufficient for His praise.
These therefore are occasional and pass;
Form'd for the confutation of the fool,
Whose lying heart disputes against a God;
That office served, they must be swept away.
Not so the labours of His love: they shine
In other heavens than these that we behold,
And fade not. There is paradise that fears
No forfeiture, and of its fruits He sends
Large prelibation oft to saints below.
Of these the first in order, and the pledge
And confident assurance of the rest,
Is liberty; a flight into his arms,
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,

A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,
And full immunity from penal woe.
Chains are the portion of revolted man,
Stripes, and a dungeon; and his body serves
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,
Opprobrious residence he finds them all.
Propense his heart to idols, he is held
In silly dotage on created things,
Careless of their Creator. And that low
And sordid gravitation of his powers
To a vile clod, so draws him, with such force
Resistless from the centre he should seek,
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes
Tend downwards; his ambition is to sink,
To reach a depth profounder still, and still
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.
But ere he gain the comfortless repose
He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul
In heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—
What does he not? from lusts opposed in vain,
And self-reproaching conscience. He foresees
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,
Fortune and dignity; the loss of all
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,
Short as it is, supportable. Still worse,
Far worse than all the plagues with which his sins
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes
Ages of hopeless misery; future death,
And death still future: not a hasty stroke,
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave,
But unrepealable enduring death.
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears;
What none can prove a forgery, may be true;
What none but bad men wish exploded, must.
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud
Nor drunk enough to drown it. In the midst
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere,
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,
And seems dethroned and vanquish'd. Peace ensues,
But spurious and short-lived, the puny child
Of self-congratulating pride, begot
On fancied innocence. Again he falls,
And fights again; but finds his best essay
A presage ominous, portending still
Its own dishonour by a worse relapse,

Till nature, unavailing nature, foil'd
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now
Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cause
Perversely, which of late she so condemn'd;
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn
And tatter'd in the service of debauch,
Covering his shame from his offended sight.
"Hath God indeed given appetites to man,
And stored the earth so plenteously with means
To gratify the hunger of His wish,
And doth He reprobate and will He damn
The use of His own bounty? making first
So frail a kind, and then enacting laws
So strict, that less than perfect must despair?
Falsehood! which whoso but suspects of truth
Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.
Do they themselves, who undertake for hire
The teacher's office, and dispense at large
Their weekly dole of edifying strains,
Attend to their own music? have they faith
In what with such solemnity of tone
And gesture they propound to our belief?
Nay,—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice
Is but an instrument on which the priest
May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,
The unequivocal authentic deed,
We find sound argument, we read the heart."
Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong
To excuses in which reason has no part)
Serve to compose a spirit well inclined
To live on terms of amity with vice,
And sin without disturbance. Often urged
(As often as libidinous discourse
Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes
Of theological and grave import,)
They gain at last his unreserved assent;
Till harden'd his heart's temper in the forge
Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,
He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,
Or nothing much, his constancy in ill;
Vain tampering has but fostered his disease;
'Tis desperate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.
Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.
Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear
Of rectitude and fitness; moral truth
How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,
Consulted and obey'd, to guide his steps

Directly to THE FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.
Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers
Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise;
Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,
And with poetic trappings grace thy prose,
Till it outmantle all the pride of verse.—
Ah, tinkling cymbal and high-sounding brass,
Smitten in vain! such music cannot charm
The eclipse that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,
And chills and darkens a wide wandering soul.
The *still small voice* is wanted. He must speak,
Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect,
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.
Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech
And stately tone of moralists, who boast,
As if, like him of fabulous renown,
They had indeed ability to smooth
The shag of savage nature, and were each
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song.
But transformation of apostate man
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,
And He by means in philosophic eyes
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves
The wonder; humanizing what is brute
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips
Of asps their venom, overpowering strength
By weakness, and hostility by love.
Patriots have toil'd, and in their country's cause
Bled nobly, and their deeds, as they deserve,
Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic muse,
Proud of the treasure, marches with it down
To latest times; and Sculpture, in her turn,
Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass
To guard them, and to immortalize her trust.
But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,
To those who, posted at the shrine of truth,
Have fallen in her defence. A patriot's blood,
Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,
And for a time ensure to his loved land,
The sweets of liberty and equal laws;
But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed
In confirmation of the noblest claim,
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,

To soar, and to anticipate the skies.
Yet few remember them. They lived unknown
'Till Persecution dragg'd them into fame,
And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew
—No marble tells us whither. With their names
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song;
And history, so warm on meaner themes,
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed
The tyranny that doom'd them to the fire,
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.*
He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
That hellish foes confederate for his harm
Can wind around him, but he casts it off
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.
He looks abroad into the varied field
Of nature, and though poor perhaps, compared
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,
And the resplendent rivers. His to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say—"My Father made them all!"
Are they not his by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of interest his,
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That plann'd, and built, and still upholds a world
So clothed with beauty, for rebellious man?
Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good
In senseless riot; but ye will not find
In feast or in the chase, in song or dance,
A liberty like his, who unimpeach'd
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong,
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,
And has a richer use of yours, than you.
He is indeed a freeman; free by birth
Of no mean city, plann'd or e'er the hills
Were built, the fountains open'd, or the sea
With all his roaring multitude of waves.
His freedom is the same in every state;

* See Hume, cap. 37. (C.)

And no condition of this changeful life,
So manifold in cares, whose every day
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less:
For he has wings that neither sickness, pain,
Nor penury can cripple or confine.
No nook so narrow but he spreads them there
With ease, and is at large. The oppressor holds
His body bound, but knows not what a range
His spirit takes, unconscious of a chain,
And that to bind him is a vain attempt
Whom God delights in, and in whom He dwells.
Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to His embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before;
Thine eye shall be instructed, and thine heart,
Made pure, shall relish with divine delight
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top with faces prone
And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate heedless of the scene outspread
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
From inland regions to the distant main.
Man views it and admires, but rests content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
But not its Author. Unconcern'd who form'd
The paradise he sees, he finds it such,
And such well-pleased to find it, asks no more.
Not so the mind that has been touch'd from Heaven,
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
To read His wonders, in whose thought the world,
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.
Not for its own sake merely, but for His
Much more who fashion'd it, he gives it praise;
Praise that from earth resulting as it ought
To earth's acknowledged sovereign, finds at once
Its only just proprietor in Him.
The soul that sees Him, or receives sublimed
New faculties, or learns at least to employ
More worthily the powers she own'd before,
Discerns in all things, what with stupid gaze
Of ignorance till then she overlook'd,
A ray of heavenly light gilding all forms
Terrestrial in the vast and the minute,
The unambiguous footsteps of the God
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels His throne upon the rolling worlds.
Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds,

With those fair ministers of light to man,
That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,
Sweet conference; inquires what strains were they
With which Heaven rang, when every star, in haste
To gratulate the new-created earth,
Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God
Shouted for joy.—"Tell me, ye shining hosts
That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
If from your elevation, whence ye view
Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
And systems of whose birth no tidings yet
Have reach'd this nether world, ye spy a race
Favour'd as ours, transgressors from the womb,
And hasting to a grave, yet doom'd to rise,
And to possess a brighter heaven than yours?
As one who long detain'd on foreign shores
Pants to return, and when he sees afar
His country's weather-bleach'd and batter'd rocks,
From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
Radiant with joy towards the happy land;
So I with animated hopes behold,
And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
That show like beacons in the blue abyss,
Ordain'd to guide the embodied spirit home,
From toilsome life to never-ending rest.
Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
That give assurance of their own success,
And that infused from Heaven must thither tend."
So reads he nature whom the lamp of truth
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!
Which whoso sees, no longer wanders lost
With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built,
With means that were not till by Thee employ'd,
Worlds that had never been hadst Thou in strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are Thy witnesses, who speak Thy power
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not, or receive not their report.
In vain Thy creatures testify of Thee
Till Thou proclaim Thyself. Theirs is indeed
A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of Thine
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use.
Till Thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell,
Yet deem'd oracular, lure down to death

The uninform'd and heedless souls of men.
We give to Chance, blind Chance, ourselves as blind,
The glory of Thy work, which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved
Then skilful most when most severely judged.
But Chance is not; or is not where thou reign'st:
Thy providence forbids that fickle power
(If power she be that works but to confound)
To mix her wild vagaries with Thy laws.
Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods such as guilt makes welcome; gods that sleep,
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as Thou art pure,
Made such by Thee, we love Thee for that cause
For which we shunn'd and hated Thee before.
Then we are free: then liberty like day
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from Heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not
Till Thou hast touch'd them; 'tis the voice of song,
A loud Hosanna sent from all Thy works,
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise.
In that blest moment, Nature throwing wide
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The Author of her beauties, who, retired
Behind His own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears His power denied.
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word!
From Thee departing, they are lost and rove,
At random without honour, hope, or peace.
From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But oh, Thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown!
Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are poor;
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.

BOOK VI.—THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

ARGUMENT.

Bells at a distance—Their effect—A fine noon in winter—A sheltered walk—Meditation better than books—Our familiarity with the course of nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is—The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described —A mistake concerning the course of nature corrected—God maintains it by an unremitted act—The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reproved—Animals happy, a delightful sight—Origin of cruelty to animals—That it is a great crime proved from Scripture—That proof illustrated by a tale—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful destruction of them—Their good and useful properties insisted on—Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author upon animals—Instances of man's extravagant praise of man—The groans of the creation shall have an end—A view taken of the restoration of all things—An invocation and an invitation of Him who shall bring it to pass—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness —Conclusion.

There is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
And as the mind is pitch'd the ear is pleased
With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave.
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.
How soft the music of those village bells
Falling at intervals upon the ear
In cadence sweet! now dying all away,
Now pealing loud again and louder still,
Clear and sonorous as the gale comes on.
With easy force it opens all the cells
Where memory slept. Wherever I have heard
A kindred melody, the scene recurs,
And with it all its pleasures and its pains.
Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,
That in a few short moments I retrace
(As in a map the voyager his course)
The windings of my way through many years.
Short as in retrospect the journey seems,
It seem'd not always short; the rugged path,
And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,
Moved many a sigh at its disheartening length.
Yet feeling present evils, while the past
Faintly impress the mind, or not at all,
How readily we wish time spent revoked,
That we might try the ground again, where once
(Through inexperience as we now perceive)
We miss'd that happiness we might have found!
Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend,
A father, whose authority, in show

When most severe, and mustering all its force,
Was but the graver countenance of love;
Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might lower,
And utter now and then an awful voice,
But had a blessing in its darkest frown,
Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.
We loved, but not enough, the gentle hand
That rear'd us. At a thoughtless age allured
By every gilded folly, we renounced
His sheltering side, and wilfully forewent
That converse which we now in vain regret.
How gladly would the man recall to life
The boy's neglected sire! a mother too,
That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,
Might he demand them at the gates of death.
Sorrow has, since they went, subdued and tamed
The playful humour; he could now endure
(Himself grown sober in the vale of tears)
And feel a parent's presence no restraint.
But not to understand a treasure's worth
Till time has stolen away the slighted good,
Is cause of half the poverty we feel,
And makes the world the wilderness it is.
The few that pray at all pray oft amiss,
And, seeking grace to improve the prize they hold,
Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.
The night was winter in its roughest mood,
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale,
And through the trees I view the embattled tower
Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk still verdant, under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof though moveable through all its length
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,
And intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes and more than half suppress'd:

Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have ofttimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men,
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smoothed and squared and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthrall'd.
Some, to the fascination of a name
Surrender judgment hoodwink'd. Some the style
Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
Of error leads them, by a tune entranced.
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
The insupportable fatigue of thought,
And swallowing therefore, without pause or choice,
The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And sheepwalks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
Not shy as in the world, and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.
What prodigies can power divine perform
More grand than it produces year by year,
And all in sight of inattentive man?
Familiar with the effect we slight the cause,
And in the constancy of nature's course,
The regular return of genial months,
And renovation of a faded world,
See nought to wonder at. Should God again,
As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race

Of the undeviating and punctual sun,
How would the world admire! but speaks it less
An agency divine, to make him know
His moment when to sink and when to rise,
Age after age, than to arrest his course?
All we behold is miracle, but seen
So duly, all is miracle in vain.
Where now the vital energy that moved,
While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph
Through the imperceptible meandering veins
Of leaf and flower? It sleeps; and the icy touch
Of unprolific winter has impress'd
A cold stagnation on the intestine tide.
But let the months go round, a few short months,
And all shall be restored. These naked shoots,
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And more aspiring, and with ampler spread,
Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.
Then, each in its peculiar honours clad,
Shall publish, even to the distant eye,
Its family and tribe. Laburnum rich
In streaming gold; syringa ivory pure;
The scentless and the scented rose, this red
And of an humbler growth, the other tall,*
And throwing up into the darkest gloom
Of neighbouring cypress, or more sable yew,
Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf
That the wind severs from the broken wave;
The lilac various in array, now white,
Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
With purple spikes pyramidal, as if
Studious of ornament, yet unresolved
Which hue she most approved, she chose them all;
Copious of flowers the woodbine, pale and wan,
But well compensating her sickly looks
With never-cloying odours, early and late;
Hypericum† all bloom, so thick a swarm
Of flowers like flies clothing her slender rods
That scarce a leaf appears; mezereon, too,
Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset
With blushing wreaths investing every spray;
Althæa‡ with the purple eye; the broom,
Yellow and bright as bullion unalloy'd

* Guelder rose. (C.)

† The common St. John's wort.

‡ The mallow.

Her blossoms; and luxuriant above all
The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf
Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more
The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.
These have been, and these shall be in their day;
And all this uniform, uncolour'd scene
Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,
And flush into variety again.
From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,
Is Nature's progress when she lectures man
In heavenly truth; evincing as she makes
The grand transition, that there lives and works
A soul in all things, and that soul is God.
The beauties of the wilderness are His,
That make so gay the solitary place
Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms
That cultivation glories in are His,
He sets the bright procession on its way,
And marshals all the order of the year;
He marks the bounds which Winter may not pass,
And blunts his pointed fury; in its case,
Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ
Uninjured, with inimitable art;
And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,
Designs the blooming wonders of the next.
Some say that in the origin of things,
When all creation started into birth,
The infant elements received a law
From which they swerve not since. That under force
Of that controlling ordinance they move,
And need not His immediate hand who first
Prescribed their course, to regulate it now.
Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God
The incumbrance of His own concerns, and spare
The great Artificer of all that moves
The stress of a continual act, the pain
Of unremitted vigilance and care,
As too laborious and severe a task.
So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,
To span Omnipotence, and measure might
That knows no measure, by the scanty rule
And standard of his own, that is to-day,
And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down.
But how should matter occupy a charge,
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
So vast in its demands, unless impell'd
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,

And under pressure of some conscious cause?
The Lord of all, Himself through all diffused,
Sustains and is the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect
Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire
By which the mighty process is maintain'd,
Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight
Slow-circling ages are as transient days;
Whose work is without labour; whose designs
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts;
And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.
Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,
With self-taught rites, and under various names,
Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,
And Flora and Vertumnus; peopling earth
With tutelary goddesses and gods
That were not, and commending as they would
To each some province, garden, field, or grove.
But all are under One. One spirit—His
Who wore the plaited thorns with bleeding brows—
Rules universal nature. Not a flower
But shows some touch in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of His unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odours and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the seaside sands,
The forms with which He sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with Him! whom what he finds
Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad, majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.
His presence, who made all so fair, perceived,
Makes all still fairer. As with Him no scene
Is dreary, so with Him all seasons please.
Though winter had been none, had man been true,
And earth be punish'd for its tenant's sake,
Yet not in vengeance; as this smiling sky,
So soon succeeding such an angry night,
And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream
Recovering fast its liquid music, prove.
  Who, then, that has a mind well strung and tuned
To contemplation, and within his reach
A scene so friendly to his favourite task,
Would waste attention at the chequer'd board,
His host of wooden warriors to and fro
Marching and countermarching, with an eye

As fix'd as marble, with a forehead ridged
And furrow'd into storms, and with a hand
Trembling, as if eternity were hung
In balance on his conduct of a pin?
Nor envies he aught more their idle sport,
Who pant with application misapplied
To trivial toys, and pushing ivory balls
Across a velvet level, feel a joy
Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds
Its destined goal of difficult access.
Nor deems he wiser him, who gives his noon
To miss, the mercer's plague, from shop to shop
Wandering, and littering with unfolded silks
The polish'd counter, and approving none,
Or promising with smiles to call again.
Nor him, who by his vanity seduced,
And soothed into a dream that he discerns
The difference of a Guido from a daub,
Frequents the crowded auction. Station'd there
As duly as the Langford* of the show,
With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,
And tongue accomplish'd in the fulsome cant
And pedantry that coxcombs learn with ease,
Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls,
He notes it in his book, then raps his box,
Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate
That he has let it pass—but never bids.
Here unmolested, through whatever sign
The sun proceeds, I wander: neither mist,
Nor freezing sky, nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
Even in the spring and playtime of the year,
That calls the unwonted villager abroad
With all her little ones, a sportive train,
To gather kingcups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me; and the stockdove, unalarm'd,
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends
His long love-ditty for my near approach.
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm
That age or injury has hollow'd deep,
Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,

* A celebrated auctioneer of books, pictures, and articles of *vertu*.

He has outslept the winter, ventures forth
To frisk a while, and bask in the warm sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play.
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,
Ascends the neighbouring beech; there whisks his brush,
And perks his ears, and stamps and scolds aloud,
With all the prettiness of feign'd alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.
  The heart is hard in nature, and unfit
For human fellowship, as being void
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased
With sight of animals enjoying life,
Nor feels their happiness augment his own.
The bounding fawn, that darts across the glade
When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,
And spirits buoyant with excess of glee;
The horse, as wanton and almost as fleet,
That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,
Then stops and snorts, and throwing high his heels,
Starts to the voluntary race again;
The very kine that gambol at high noon,
The total herd receiving first from one
That leads the dance a summons to be gay,
Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth
Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent
To give such act and utterance as they may
To ecstasy too big to be suppress'd;
These, and a thousand images of bliss,
With which kind nature graces every scene
Where cruel man defeats not her design,
Impart to the benevolent, who wish
All that are capable of pleasure pleased,
A far superior happiness to theirs,
The comfort of a reasonable joy.
  Man scarce had risen, obedient to His call
Who form'd him from the dust, his future grave,
When he was crown'd as never king was since.
God set the diadem upon his head,
And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood
The new-made monarch, while before him pass'd,
All happy, and all perfect in their kind,
The creatures, summon'd from their various haunts
To see their sovereign, and confess his sway.
Vast was his empire, absolute his power,
Or bounded only by a law whose force
'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel
And own, the law of universal love.

He ruled with meekness, they obey'd with joy;
No cruel purpose lurk'd within his heart,
And no distrust of his intent in theirs.
So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,
Where kindness on his part who ruled the whole
Begat a tranquil confidence in all,
And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.
But sin marr'd all; and the revolt of man,
That source of evils not exhausted yet,
Was punish'd with revolt of his from him.
Garden of God, how terrible the change
Thy groves and lawns then witness'd! Every heart,
Each animal of every name, conceived
A jealousy and an instinctive fear,
And, conscious of some danger, either fled
Precipitate the loathed abode of man,
Or growl'd defiance in such angry sort,
As taught him too to tremble in his turn.
Thus harmony and family accord
Were driven from Paradise; and in that hour
The seeds of cruelty, that since have swell'd
To such gigantic and enormous growth,
Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.
Hence date the persecution and the pain
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
Or his base gluttony, are causes good
And just in his account, why bird and beast
Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed
With blood of their inhabitants impaled.
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war
Waged with defenceless innocence, while he,
Not satisfied to prey on all around,
Adds tenfold bitterness to death, by pangs
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.
Now happiest they that occupy the scenes
The most remote from his abhorr'd resort.
Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,
They fear'd, and as His perfect image loved.
The wilderness is theirs, with all its caves,
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains
Unvisited by man. There they are free,
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontroll'd,
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.
Woe to the tyrant, if he dare intrude
Within the confines of their wild domain.
The lion tells him—"I am monarch here!"

And if he spare him, spares him on the terms
Of royal mercy, and through generous scorn
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.
In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,
Or by necessity constrain'd, they live
Dependent upon man, those in his fields,
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof;
They prove too often at how dear a rate
He sells protection. Witness at his foot
The spaniel dying for some venial fault,
Under dissection of the knotted scourge;
Witness, the patient ox, with stripes and yells
Driven to the slaughter, goaded as he runs
To madness, while the savage at his heels
Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury spent
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
He too is witness, noblest of the train
That wait on man, the flight-performing horse:
With unsuspecting readiness he takes
His murderer on his back, and push'd all day,
With bleeding sides, and flanks that heave for life,
To the far-distant goal, arrives and dies.
So little mercy shows who needs so much!
Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,
Denounce no doom on the delinquent? None.
He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts
(As if barbarity were high desert)
The inglorious feat, and clamorous in praise
Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose
The honours of his matchless horse his own.
But many a crime deem'd innocent in earth
Is register'd in heaven, and these, no doubt,
Have each their record, with a curse annex'd.
Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,
But God will never. When He charged the Jew
To assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise,*
And when the bush-exploring boy that seized
The young, to let the parent bird go free,†
Proved He not plainly that His meaner works
Are yet His care, and have an interest all,
All in the universal Father's love?
On Noah, and in him on all mankind,
The charter was conferr'd, by which we hold
The flesh of animals in fee, and claim
O'er all we feed on, power of life and death.‡

* Exodus xxiii. 5. † Deuteronomy xxii. 6, 7. ‡ Genesis ix. 2, 3.

Snorting, and starting into sudden rage,
Unbidden, and not now to be controll'd,
Rush'd to the cliff, and having reached it, stood.
At once the shock unseated him: he flew
Sheer o'er the craggy barrier, and immersed
Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not,
The death he had deserved, and died alone.
So God wrought double justice; made the fool
The victim of his own tremendous choice,
And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.
I would not enter on my list of friends
(Though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail
That crawls at evening in the public path;
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
A visitor unwelcome, into scenes
Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,
The chamber, or refectory, may die:
A necessary act incurs no blame.
Not so when, held within their proper bounds,
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,
Or take their pastime in the spacious field:
There they are privileged; and he that hunts
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,
Disturbs the economy of nature's realm,
Who when she form'd, design'd them an abode.
The sum is this: if man's convenience, health,
Or safety interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
Else they are all—the meanest things that are,
As free to live and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the first,
Who in His sovereign wisdom made them all.
Ye therefore who love mercy, teach your sons
To love it too. The spring-time of our years
Is soon dishonour'd and defiled in most
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand
To check them. But, alas! none sooner shoots,
If unrestrain'd, into luxuriant growth,
Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.
Mercy to him that shews it, is the rule
And righteous limitation of its act,
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man;

And he that shews none, being ripe in years,
And conscious of the outrage he commits,
Shall seek it and not find it in his turn.
Distinguish'd much by reason, and still more
By our capacity of grace divine,
From creatures that exist but for our sake,
Which having served us, perish, we are held
Accountable, and God, some future day,
Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse
Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.
Superior as we are, they yet depend
Not more on human help, than we on theirs.
Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were given
In aid of our defects. In some are found
Such teachable and apprehensive parts,
That man's attainments in his own concerns,
Match'd with the expertness of the brutes in theirs,
Are ofttimes vanquish'd and thrown far behind.
Some show that nice sagacity of smell,
And read with such discernment in the port
And figure of the man, his secret aim,
That oft we owe our safety to a skill
We could not teach, and must despair to learn.
But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop
To quadruped instructors, many a good
And useful quality, and virtue too,
Rarely exemplified among ourselves;
Attachment never to be wean'd or changed
By any change of fortune, proof alike
Against unkindness, absence, and neglect;
Fidelity that neither bribe nor threat
Can move or warp; and gratitude for small
And trivial favours, lasting as the life,
And glistening even in the dying eye.
Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms
Wins public honour; and ten thousand sit
Patiently present at a sacred song,
Commemoration-mad; content to hear
(Oh wonderful effect of music's power!)
Messiah's eulogy, for Handel's sake.
But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—
(For was it less—what heathen would have dared
To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath,
And hang it up in honour of a man?)
Much less might serve, when all that we design
Is but to gratify an itching ear,
And give the day to a musician's praise.
Remember Handel? Who that was not born

Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
Or can, the more than Homer of his age?
Yes—we remember him; and while we praise
A talent so divine, remember too
That His most holy Book from whom it came
Was never meant, was never used before,
To buckram out the memory of a man.
But hush!—the muse perhaps is too severe,
And with a gravity beyond the size
And measure of the offence, rebukes a deed
Less impious than absurd, and owing more
To want of judgment than to wrong design.
So in the chapel of old Ely House,
When wandering Charles,* who meant to be the third,
Had fled from William,† and the news was fresh,
The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,
And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,
Sung to the praise and glory of King George.
Man praises man; and Garrick's memory next,
When time hath somewhat mellow'd it, and made
The idol of our worship while he lived,
The god of our idolatry once more,
Shall have its altar; and the world shall go
In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine.
The theatre, too small, shall suffocate
Its squeezed contents, and more than it admits
Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return
Ungratified. For there some noble lord
Shall stuff his shoulders with King Richard's bunch,
Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak,
And strut and storm and straddle, stamp and stare,
To shew the world how Garrick did not act.
For Garrick was a worshipper himself;
He drew the liturgy, and framed the rites
And solemn ceremonial of the day,
And call'd the world to worship on the banks
Of Avon famed in song.‡ Ah, pleasant proof
That piety has still in human hearts
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.
The mulberry-tree was hung with blooming wreaths;
The mulberry-tree stood centre of the dance;
The mulberry-tree was hymn'd with dulcet airs;
And from his touchwood trunk the mulberry-tree

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* The Prince Charles Edward Stuart.

† The Duke of Cumberland. The news of the victory at Culloden reached London on Sunday morning.

‡ Alluding to Garrick's Shakspeare Commemoration held at Stratford-on-Avon, 1769.

Supplied such relics as devotion holds
Still sacred, and preserves with pious care.
So 'twas a hallow'd time: decorum reign'd,
And mirth without offence. No few return'd,
Doubtless much edified, and all refresh'd.
—Man praises man. The rabble all alive,
From tippling benches, cellars, stalls, and styes,
Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,
A pompous and slow-moving pageant, comes.
Some shout him, and some hang upon his car
To gaze in his eyes, and bless him. Maidens wave
Their kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy;
While others, not so satisfied, unhorse
The gilded equipage, and turning loose
His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.
Why? what has charm'd them? Hath he saved the state?
No. Doth he purpose its salvation? No.
Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,
That finds out every crevice of the head
That is not sound and perfect, hath in theirs
Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,
And his own cattle must suffice him soon.
Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,
And dedicate a tribute, in its use
And just direction sacred, to a thing
Doom'd to the dust, or lodged already there.
Encomium in old time was poets' work;
But poets having lavishly long since
Exhausted all materials of the art,
The task now falls into the public hand;
And I, contented with an humble theme,
Have pour'd my stream of panegyric down
The vale of nature, where it creeps and winds
Among her lovely works, with a secure
And unambitious course reflecting clear
If not the virtues, yet the worth of brutes.
And I am recompensed, and deem the toils
Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine
May stand between an animal and woe,
And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.
The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end.
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung
Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,
The time of rest, the promised sabbath, comes.
Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh
Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world; and what remains

Of this tempestuous state of human things,
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest:
For He whose car the winds are, and the clouds
The dust that waits upon His sultry march,
When sin hath moved Him, and His wrath is hot,
Shall visit earth in mercy; shall descend
Propitious, in His chariot paved with love,
And what His storms have blasted and defaced
For man's revolt, shall with a smile repair.
 Sweet is the harp of prophecy; too sweet
Not to be wrong'd by a mere mortal touch;
Nor can the wonders it records be sung
To meaner music, and not suffer loss.
But when a poet, or when one like me,
Happy to rove among poetic flowers,
Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last
On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,
Such is the impulse and the spur he feels
To give it praise proportion'd to its worth,
That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems
The labour, were a task more arduous still.
 Oh scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplish'd bliss! which who can see
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy?
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
Laughs with abundance: and the land once lean,
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
Exults to see its thistly curse repeal'd.
The various seasons woven into one,
And that one season an eternal spring,
The garden feels no blight, and needs no fence,
For there is none to covet, all are full.
The lion, and the libbard,* and the bear
Graze with the fearless flocks; all bask at noon
Together, or all gambol in the shade
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.
Antipathies are none. No foe to man
Lurks in the serpent now: the mother sees,
And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand
Stretch'd forth to dally with the crested worm,
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive

* Leopard; libbard is an old English word found in Spenser and Shakspeare.

The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.
All creatures worship man, and all mankind
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place:
That creeping pestilence is driven away:
The breath of Heaven has chased it. In the heart
No passion touches a discordant string,
But all is harmony and love. Disease
Is not; the pure and uncontaminate blood
Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.
One song employs all nations, and all cry,
"Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain for us!"
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and the mountain-tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
Till, nation after nation, taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.
Behold the measure of the promise fill'd;
See Salem built, the labour of a God!
Bright as a sun the sacred city shines;
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth
Flock to that light; the glory of all lands
Flows into her; unbounded is her joy,
And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,
Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there;*
The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,
And Saba's spicy groves, pay tribute there.
Praise is in all her gates: upon her walls,
And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,
Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there
Kneels with the native of the furthest west,
And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand
And worships. Her report has travell'd forth
Into all lands. From every clime they come
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
O Sion! an assembly such as earth
Saw never, such as heaven stoops down to see.
Thus heavenward all things tend. For all were once
Perfect, and all must be at length restored.
So God has greatly purposed; who would else
In His dishonour'd works Himself endure
Dishonour, and be wrong'd without redress.
Haste then, and wheel away a shatter'd world,
Ye slow-revolving seasons! we would see
(A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)

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* Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.—(C.)

A world that does not dread and hate His laws,
And suffer for its crime; would learn how fair
The creature is that God pronounces good,
How pleasant in itself what pleases Him.
Here every drop of honey hides a sting;
Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers,
And even the joy that haply some poor heart
Derives from Heaven, pure as the fountain is,
Is sullied in the stream; taking a taint
From touch of human lips, at best impure.
Oh for a world in principle as chaste
As this is gross and selfish! over which
Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway
That govern all things here, shouldering aside
The meek and modest truth, and forcing her
To seek a refuge from the tongue of strife
In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men;
Where violence shall never lift the sword,
Nor cunning justify the proud man's wrong,
Leaving the poor no remedy but tears;
Where he that fills an office, shall esteem
The occasion it presents of doing good
More than the perquisite; where law shall speak
Seldom, and never but as wisdom prompts
And equity: not jealous more to guard
A worthless form, than to decide aright;
Where fashion shall not sanctify abuse,
Nor smooth good-breeding (supplemental grace)
With lean performance ape the work of love.
Come then, and, added to Thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,
Thou who alone art worthy! It was Thine
By ancient covenant, ere Nature's birth,
And Thou hast made it Thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with Thy blood.
Thy saints proclaim Thee king; and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipp'd in the fountain of eternal love.
Thy saints proclaim Thee king; and Thy delay
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see
The dawn of Thy last advent, long desired,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
The very spirit of the world is tired
Of its own taunting question, ask'd so long,
"Where is the promise of your Lord's approach?"*

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* 2 St. Peter iii. 4.

The infidel has shot his bolts away,
Till his exhausted quiver yielding none,
He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoil'd,
And aims them at the shield of Truth again.
The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,
That hides divinity from mortal eyes,
And all the mysteries to faith proposed,
Insulted and traduced, are cast aside
As useless, to the moles and to the bats.
They now are deem'd the faithful, and are praised,
Who constant only in rejecting Thee,
Deny Thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,
And quit their office for their error's sake.*
Blind and in love with darkness! yet even these
Worthy, compared with sycophants, who knee
Thy name adoring, and then preach Thee man!
So fares Thy Church. But how Thy Church may fare
The world takes little thought; who will may preach,
And what they will. All pastors are alike
To wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.
Two gods divide them all—Pleasure and Gain:
For these they live, they sacrifice to these,
And in their service wage perpetual war
With conscience and with Thee. Lust in their hearts,
And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth
To prey upon each other; stubborn, fierce,
High-minded, foaming out their own disgrace.
Thy prophets speak of such; and, noting down
The features of the last degenerate times,
Exhibit every lineament of these.
Come, then, and added to Thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to thy last and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfill'd, the conquest of a world.
He is the happy man whose life even now
Shews somewhat of that happier life to come;
Who, doom'd to an obscure but tranquil state,
Is pleased with it, and, were he free to choose,
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace the fruit
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one
Content indeed to sojourn while he must
Below the skies, but having there his home.
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search,
Of objects more illustrious in her view;
And occupied as earnestly as she,

* Unitarian seceders from the church at that period.

Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not;
He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.
He cannot skim the ground like summer birds
Pursuing gilded flies, and such he deems
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.
Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth
She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,
And shows him glories yet to be reveal'd.
Not slothful he, though seeming unemploy'd,
And censured oft as useless. Stillest streams
Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird
That flutters least is longest on the wing.
Ask him indeed what trophies he has raised,
Or what achievements of immortal fame
He purposes, and he shall answer—None.
His warfare is within. There unfatigued
His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,
And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,
And never-withering wreaths, compared with which
The laurels that a Cæsar reaps are weeds.
Perhaps the self-approving haughty world,
That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks
Scarce deigns to notice him, or, if she see,
Deems him a cipher in the works of God,
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring
And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes,
When Isaac-like, the solitary saint
Walks forth to meditate at eventide,
And think on her, who thinks not for herself.
Forgive him, then, thou bustler in concerns
Of little worth, an idler at the best,
If, author of no mischief and some good,
He seeks his proper happiness by means
That may advance, but cannot hinder thine.
Nor though he tread the secret path of life,
Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,
Account him an encumbrance on the state,
Receiving benefits, and rendering none.
His sphere, though humble, if that humble sphere
Shine with his fair example, and though small
His influence, if that influence all be spent
In soothing sorrow and in quenching strife,
In aiding helpless indigence, in works
From which at least a grateful few derive

Some taste of comfort in a world of woe.
Then let the supercilious great confess
He serves his country; recompenses well
The state beneath the shadow of whose vine
He sits secure; and in the scale of life
Holds no ignoble, though a slighted place.
The man whose virtues are more felt than seen,
Must drop indeed the hope of public praise;
But he may boast what few that win it can,
That if his country stand not by his skill,
At least his follies have not wrought her fall.
Polite refinement offers him in vain
Her golden tube, through which a sensual world
Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,
The neat conveyance hiding all the offence.
Not that he peevishly rejects a mode
Because that world adopts it. If it bear
The stamp and clear impression of good sense
And be not costly more than of true worth,
He puts it on, and for decorum sake
Can wear it even as gracefully as she.
She judges of refinement by the eye,
He by the test of conscience, and a heart
Not soon deceived; aware that what is base
No polish can make sterling, and that vice,
Though well perfumed and elegantly dress'd,
Like an unburied carcass trick'd with flowers,
Is but a garnish'd nuisance, fitter far
For cleanly riddance than for fair attire.
So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,
More golden than that age of fabled gold
Renown'd in ancient song; not vex'd with care
Or stained with guilt, beneficent, approved
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.
So glide my life away! and so at last,
My share of duties decently fulfilled,
May some disease, not tardy to perform
Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,
Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,
Beneath the turf that I have often trod.
It shall not grieve me, then, that once, when called
To dress a Sofa with the flowers of verse,
I played awhile, obedient to the fair,
With that light task; but soon, to please her more,
Whom flowers alone I knew would little please,
Let fall the unfinished wreath, and roved for fruit;
Roved far, and gathered much. some harsh, 'tis true,
Picked from the thorns and briers of reproof,

But wholesome, well-digested; grateful some
To palates that can taste immortal truth,
Insipid else, and sure to be despised.
But all is in His hand whose praise I seek.
In vain the Poet sings, and the World hears,
If He regard not, though divine the theme.
'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,
To charm His ear, whose eye is on the heart,
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation prosper—even mine.



TIROCINIUM;

OR, A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS.

1785.

Κεφαλαιον δη παιδειας ορθη τροφη.—PLATO.
Αρχη πολιτειας απασης, νεων τροφα.—DIOG. LAERT.

TO THE

REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN,

RECTOR OF STOCK IN ESSEX,

THE TUTOR OF HIS TWO SONS,

THE FOLLOWING POEM,

RECOMMENDING PRIVATE TUITION IN PREFERENCE TO AN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL,

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

WILLIAM COWPER.

Olney, Nov. 6th, 1784.

It is not from his form, in which we trace
Strength joined with beauty, dignity with grace,
That man, the master of this globe, derives
His right of empire over all that lives.
That form, indeed, the associate of a mind
Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind,—
That form, the labour of Almighty skill,
Framed for the service of a free-born will,
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.
Hers is the state, the splendour, and the throne,
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.
For her, the Memory fills her ample page
With truths poured down from every distant age;
For her, amasses an unbounded store,
The wisdom of great nations, now no more;

Though laden, not encumbered with her spoil,
Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil,
When copiously supplied, then most enlarged,
Still to be fed, and not to be surcharged.
For her the Fancy, roving unconfined,
The present Muse of every pensive mind,
Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue
To Nature's scenes, than Nature ever knew.
At her command winds rise and waters roar,
Again she lays them slumbering on the shore;
With flower and fruit the wilderness supplies,
Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.
For her the Judgment, umpire in the strife
That Grace and Nature have to wage through life,
Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,
Appointed sage preceptor to the Will,
Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice
Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.
Why did the fiat of a God give birth
To yon fair Sun and his attendant Earth?
And when descending he resigns the skies,
Why takes the gentler Moon her turn to rise,
Whom Ocean feels through all his countless waves,
And owns her power on every shore he laves?
Why do the seasons still enrich the year,
Fruitful and young as in their first career?
Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,
Rocked in the cradle of the western breeze;
Summer in haste the thriving charge receives,
Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,
Till Autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews
Dye them at last in all their glowing hues.—
'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,
Power misemployed, munificence misplaced,
Had not its author dignified the plan,
And crowned it with the majesty of man.
Thus formed, thus placed, intelligent and taught,
Look where he will, the wonders God has wrought,
The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws
Finds in a sober moment time to pause,
To press the important question on his heart,
"Why form'd at all, and wherefore as thou art?"
If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,
The next mere dust and ashes in the grave;
Endued with reason only to descry
His crimes and follies with an aching eye;
With passions, just that he may prove, with pain,
The force he spends against their fury vain;

And if, soon after having burned, by turns,
With every lust with which frail Nature burns,
His being end where death dissolves the bond,
The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond;
Then he, of all that Nature has brought forth,
Stands self-impeached the creature of least worth,
And useless while he lives, and when he dies,
Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.
Truths that the learned pursue with eager thought
Are not important always as dear-bought,
Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,
A childish waste of philosophic pains;
But truths on which depends our main concern,
That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,
Shine by the side of every path we tread,
With such a lustre he that runs may read.
'Tis true that, if to trifle life away
Down to the sunset of their latest day,
Then perish on futurity's wide shore
Like fleeting exhalations found no more,
Were all that Heaven required of humankind,
And all the plan their destiny designed,
What none could reverence all might justly blame,
And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.
But Reason heard, and Nature well perused,
At once the dreaming mind is disabused.
If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,
Reflect His attributes who placed them there,
Fulfil the purpose, and appear designed
Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing mind,
'Tis plain the creature whom He chose to invest
With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,
Received his nobler nature, and was made
Fit for the power in which he stands arrayed,
That first or last, hereafter if not here,
He too might make his Author's wisdom clear,
Praise Him on earth, or obstinately dumb,
Suffer His justice in a world to come.
This once believed 'twere logic misapplied
To prove a consequence by none denied,
That we are bound to cast the minds of youth,
Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,
That taught of God they may indeed be wise,
Not ignorantly wandering miss the skies.
In early days the Conscience has in most
A quickness which in later life is lost:
Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,
Or, guilty, soon relenting into tears.

Too careless often, as our years proceed,
What friends we sort with, or what books we read,
Our parents yet exert a prudent care
To feed our infant minds with proper fare,
And wisely store the nursery by degrees
With wholesome learning, yet acquired with ease.
Neatly secured from being soiled or torn
Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn.
A book (to please us at a tender age
'Tis called a book, though but a single page)
Presents the prayer the Saviour deigned to teach,
Which children use, and parsons—when they preach.
Lisping our syllables, we scramble next
Through moral narrative, or sacred text,
And learn with wonder how this world began,
Who made, who marred, and who has ransomed man;
Points, which, unless the Scripture made them plain,
The wisest heads might agitate in vain.
Oh thou,* whom, borne on Fancy's eager wing
Back to the season of life's happy spring,
I pleased remember, and, while memory yet
Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget;
Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;
Whose humórous vein, strong sense, and simple style,
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile,
Witty, and well-employed, and, like thy Lord,
Speaking in parables His slighted word,
I name thee not, lest so despised a name
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame,
Yet even in transitory life's late day,
That mingles all my brown with sober grey,
Revere the man whose PILGRIM marks the road,
And guides the PROGRESS of the soul to God.
'Twere well with most, if books that could engage
Their childhood, pleased them at a riper age;
The man approving what had charmed the boy,
Would die at last in comfort, peace, and joy,
And not with curses on his art who stole
The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.
The stamp of artless piety impressed
By kind tuition on his yielding breast,
The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,
Regards with scorn, though once received with awe,
And warped into the labyrinth of lies,
That babblers, called philosophers, devise,

* John Bunyan.

Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan
Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.
Touch but his nature in its ailing part,
Assert the native evil of his heart,
His pride resents the charge, although the proof*
Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough:
Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross
As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,
The young apostate sickens at the view,
And hates it with the malice of a Jew.
How weak the barrier of mere Nature proves,
Opposed against the pleasures Nature loves!
While self-betrayed, and wilfully undone,
She longs to yield, no sooner wooed than won.
Try now the merits of this blest exchange
Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.
Time was he closed as he began the day,
With decent duty, not ashamed to pray;
The practice was a bond upon his heart,
A pledge he gave for a consistent part;
Nor could he dare presumptuously displease
A power, confessed so lately on his knees.
But now, farewell all legendary tales,
The shadows fly, philosophy prevails,
Prayer to the winds, and caution to the waves,
Religion makes the free by nature slaves,
Priests have invented, and the world admired,
What knavish priests promulgate as inspired,
Till Reason, now no longer overawed,
Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud;
And common sense diffusing real day,
The meteor of the Gospel dies away.
Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth
Learn from expert inquirers after truth;
Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,
Is not to find what they profess to seek.
And thus, well tutored only while we share
A mother's lecture and a nurse's care,
And taught at schools much mythologic stuff,†
But sound religion sparingly enough,
Our early notices of truth, disgraced,
Soon lose their credit, and are all effaced.

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* Alluding to Uzziah, King of Judah. See 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.

† The author begs leave to explain.—Sensible that, without such knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor historians can be tasted, or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a schoolboy in the religion of the heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.—(C.)

Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,
Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once;
That in good time, the stripling's finished taste
For loose expense and fashionable waste,
Should prove your ruin, and his own at last,
Train him in public with a mob of boys,
Childish in mischief only and in noise,
Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten
In infidelity and lewdness, men.
There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old,
That authors are most useful, pawned or sold;
That pedantry is all that schools impart,
But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart;
There waiter Dick, with Bacchanalian lays,
Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,
His counsellor and bosom-friend shall prove,
And some street-pacing harlot his first love.
Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,
Detain their adolescent charge too long;
The management of tyros of eighteen
Is difficult, their punishment obscene.
The stout, tall captain, whose superior size
The minor heroes view with envious eyes,
Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix
Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.
His pride, that scorns to obey or to submit,
With them is courage; his effrontery wit;
His wild excursions, window-breaking feats,
Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets,
His hairbreadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes,
Transport them, and are made their favourite themes;
In little bosoms such achievements strike
A kindred spark, they burn to do the like.
Thus, half accomplished ere he yet begin
To show the peeping down upon his chin,
And as maturity of years comes on,
Made just the adept that you designed your son,
To ensure the perseverance of his course,
And give your monstrous project all its force,
Send him to college. If he there be tamed,
Or in one article of vice reclaimed,
Where no regard of ord'nances is shown,
Or looked for now, the fault must be his own.
Some sneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,
Where neither strumpets' charms, nor drinking bout,
Nor gambling practices, can find it out.
Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,
Ye nurseries of our boys, we owe to you:

Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,
For public schools 'tis public folly feeds.
The slaves of custom and established mode,
With packhorse constancy we keep the road,
Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,
True to the jingling of our leader's bells.
To follow foolish precedents, and wink
With both our eyes, is easier than to think,
And such an age as ours balks no expense,
Except of caution and of common sense;
Else sure, notorious fact and proof so plain,
Would turn our steps into a wiser train.
I blame not those who, with what care they can,
O'erwatch the numerous and unruly clan,
Or if I blame, 'tis only that they dare
Promise a work of which they must despair.
Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,
An ubiquarian presence and control,
Elisha's eye, that when Gehazi strayed,
Went with him, and saw all the game he played?
Yes—ye are conscious; and on all the shelves
Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves.
Or if by nature sober, ye had then,
Boys as ye were, the gravity of men,
Ye knew at least, by constant proofs addressed
To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.
But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,
And evils not to be endured, endure,
Lest power exerted, but without success,
Should make the little ye retain still less.
Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth
Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth,
And in the firmament of fame still shines
A glory bright as that of all the signs,
Of poets raised by you, and statesmen, and divines.
Peace to them all! those brilliant times are fled,
And no such lights are kindling in their stead.
Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays
As set the midnight riot in a blaze,
And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,
Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.
  Say, Muse (for education made the song,
No Muse can hesitate or linger long)
What causes move us, knowing, as we must,
That these menageries all fail their trust,
To send our sons to scout and scamper there,
While colts and puppies cost us so much care?
  Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,

We love the play-place of our early days.
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving skill,
The very name we carved subsisting still;
The bench on which we sat while deep employed,
Though mangled, hacked, and hewed, not yet destroyed;
The little ones, unbuttoned, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very spot,
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw;
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,
Or drive it devious with a dexterous pat;
The pleasing spectacle at once excites
Such recollection of our own delights,
That viewing it, we seem almost to obtain
Our innocent sweet simple years again.
This fond attachment to the well-known place,
Whence first we started into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
We feel it even in age, and at our latest day.
Hark! how the sire of chits, whose future share
Of classic food begins to be his care,
With his own likeness placed on either knee,
Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee,
And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,
That they must soon learn Latin, and to box;
Then turning, he regales his listening wife
With all the adventures of his early life,
His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise,
In bilking tavern bills, and spouting plays;
What shifts he used, detected in a scrape,
How he was flogged, or had the luck to escape,
What sums he lost at play, and how he sold
Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.
Retracing thus his *frolics* ('tis a name
That palliates deeds of folly and of shame)
He gives the local bias all its sway,
Resolves that where he played his sons shall play,
And destines their bright genius to be shown
Just in the scene where he displayed his own.
The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught
To be as bold and forward as he ought,
The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,
Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.
Ah happy designation, prudent choice,
The event is sure, expect it, and rejoice!
Soon see your wish fulfilled in either child,

The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.
  The great, indeed, by titles, riches, birth,
Excused the incumbrance of more solid worth,
Are best disposed of where with most success
They may acquire that confident address,
Those habits of profuse and lewd expense,
That scorn of all delights but those of sense,
Which though in plain plebeians we condemn,
With so much reason all expect from them.
But families of less illustrious fame,
Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,
Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,
Must shine by true desert, or not at all,
What dream they of, that, with so little care
They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure, there?
They dream of little Charles or William graced
With wig prolix, down-flowing to his waist,
They see the attentive crowds his talents draw,
They hear him speak—the oracle of law.
The father who designs his babe a priest,
Dreams him episcopally such at least,
And while the playful jockey scours the room
Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,
In fancy sees him more superbly ride
In coach with purple lined, and mitres on its side.
Events improbable and strange as these,
Which only a parental eye foresees,
A public school shall bring to pass with ease.
But how? resides such virtue in that air,
As must create an appetite for prayer?
And will it breathe into him all the zeal
That candidates for such a prize should feel,
To take the lead and be the foremost still
In all true worth and literary skill?
"Ah blind to bright futurity, untaught
"The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought!
"Church-ladders are not always mounted best
"By learned clerks, and Latinists professed.
"The exalted prize demands an upward look,
"Not to be found by poring on a book.
"Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,
"Is more than adequate to all I seek.
"Let erudition grace him or not grace,
"I give the bauble but the second place,
"His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,
"Subsist and centre in one point—a friend.
"A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,
"Shall give him consequence, heal all defects.

His intercourse with peers, and sons of peers—
"There dawns the splendour of his future years,
"In that bright quarter his propitious skies
"Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.
"'Your Lordship!' and 'Your Grace!' what school can teach
"A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech?
"What need of Homer's verse, or Tully's prose,
"Sweet interjections! if he learn but those?
"Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,
"Who starve upon a dog's-ear'd Pentateuch,
"The parson knows enough who knows a Duke."
Egregious purpose! worthily begun
In barbarous prostitution of your son;
Pressed on his part by means that would disgrace
A scrivener's clerk, or footman out of place,
And ending, if at last its end be gained,
In sacrilege, in God's own house profaned.
It may succeed; and if his sins should call
For more than common punishment, it shall.
The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on earth
Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,
To occupy a sacred, awful post,
In which the best and worthiest tremble most.
The royal letters are a thing of course,
A king, that would, might recommend his horse,
And Deans, no doubt, and Chapters, with one voice,
As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.
Behold your Bishop! well he plays his part,
Christian in name, and infidel in heart,
Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,
A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man,
Dumb as a senator, and as a priest
A piece of mere church-furniture at best;
To live estranged from God his total scope,
And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.
But fair although and feasible it seem,
Depend not much upon your golden dream;
For Providence, that seems concerned to exempt
The hallowed bench from absolute contempt,
In spite of all the wrigglers into place,
Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace;
And therefore 'tis, that, though the sight be rare,
We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot* there.
Besides, school-friendships are not always found,
Though fair in promise, permanent and sound;

* Bishop Lowth, author of "The Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews," &c. Bishop Bagot, an excellent prelate, adorned the hierarchy by his virtues.

The most disinterested and virtuous minds,
In early years connected, time unbinds;
New situations give a different cast
Of habit, inclination, temper, taste;
And he that seemed our counterpart at first,
Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.
Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
And make mistakes for manhood to reform.
Boys are, at best, but pretty buds unblown,
Whose scent and hues are rather guessed than known;
Each dreams that each is just what he appears,
But learns his error in maturer years,
When disposition, like a sail unfurled,
Shows all its rents and patches to the world.
If, therefore, even when honest in design,
A boyish friendship may so soon decline,
'Twere wiser sure to inspire a little heart
With just abhorrence of so mean a part,
Than set your son to work at a vile trade
For wages so unlikely to be paid.
 Our public hives of puerile resort,
That are of chief and most approved report,
To such base hopes, in many a sordid soul,
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.
A principle, whose proud pretensions pass
Unquestioned, though the jewel be but glass,
That with a world, not often over-nice,
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice,
Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,
Of envy, hatred, jealousy and pride,
Contributes most perhaps to enhance their fame,
And Emulation is its specious name.
Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,
Feel all the rage that female rivals feel,
The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes
Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.
The spirit of that competition burns
With all varieties of ill by turns,
Each vainly magnifies his own success,
Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,
Exults in his miscarriage if he fail,
Deems his reward too great if he prevail,
And labours to surpass him day and night,
Less for improvement than to tickle spite.
The spur is powerful, and I grant its force,
It pricks the genius forward in its course,
Allows short time for play, and none for sloth,
And felt alike by each, advances both,

But judge, where so much evil intervenes,
The end, though plausible, not worth the means.
Weigh, for a moment, classical desert
Against a heart depraved and temper hurt,
Hurt too perhaps for life, for early wrong
Done to the nobler part affects it long;
And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause
If you can crown a discipline that draws
Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.
   Connexion formed for interest, and endeared
By selfish views, thus censured and cashiered;
And Emulation, as engendering hate,
Doomed to a no less ignominious fate:
The props of such proud seminaries fall,
The Jachin and the Boaz * of them all.
Great schools rejected then, as those that swell
Beyond a size that can be managed well,
Shall royal institutions miss the bays,
And small academies win all the praise?
Force not my drift beyond its just intent,
I praise a school as Pope a government;
So take my judgment in his language dressed,
" Whate'er is best administered, is best."
Few boys are born with talents that excel,
But all are capable of living well;
Then ask not, whether limited or large?
But, watch they strictly, or neglect their charge?
If anxious only that their boys may learn,
While morals languish, a despised concern,
The great and small deserve one common blame,
Different in size, but in effect the same.
Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,
Though motives of mere lucre sway the most;
Therefore in towns and cities they abound,
For there the game they seek is easiest found,
Though there, in spite of all that care can do,
Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.
If shrewd. and of a well-constructed brain,
Keen in pursuit, and vigorous to retain,
Your son come forth a prodigy of skill;
As wheresoever taught, so formed, he will,
The pedagogue, with self complacent air,
Claims more than half the praise as his due share;
But if, with all his genius, he betray,
Not more intelligent than loose and gay,

* 1 Kings vii. 21.

Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,
Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame,
Though want of due restraint alone have bred
The symptoms that you see with so much dread,
Unenvied there, he may sustain alone
The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.
Oh! 'tis a sight to be with joy perused,
By all whom sentiment has not abused,
New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace
Of those who never feel in the right place,
A sight surpassed by none that we can show,
Though Vestris on one leg still shine below,
A father blest with an ingenuous son,
Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.
How !—turn again to tales long since forgot,
Æsop, and Phædrus, and the rest?—Why not?
He will not blush, that has a father's heart,
To take in childish plays a childish part,
But bends his sturdy back to any toy
That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy;
Then why resign into a stranger's hand
A task as much within your own command,
That God and Nature, and your interest too,
Seem with one voice to delegate to you?
Why hire a lodging in a house unknown
For one whose tenderest thoughts all hover round your own?
This second weaning, needless as it is,
How does it lacerate both your heart and his!
The indented stick that loses day by day
Notch after notch till all are smoothed away,
Pears witness, long ere his dismission come,
With what intense desire he wants his home.
But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof
Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,
Harmless, and safe, and natural as they are,
A disappointment waits him even there:
Arrived, he feels an unexpected change,
He blushes, hangs his head, is shy, and strange,
No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease,
His favourite stand between his father's knees,
But seeks the corner of some distant seat,
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,
And least familiar where he should be most,
Feels all his happiest privileges lost.
Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect
Of love by absence chilled into respect.
Say, what accomplishments at school acquired,
Brings he to sweeten fruits so undesired?

Thou well deservest an alienated son,
Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none;
None that, in thy domestic snug recess,
He had not made his own with more address,
Though some, perhaps, that shock thy feeling mind,
And better never learned, or left behind.
Add too, that thus estranged, thou canst obtain
By no kind arts his confidence again;
That here begins with most that long complaint
Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,
Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years
A parent pours into regardless ears.
Like caterpillars dangling under trees
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,
Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace
The boughs on which are bred the unseemly race,
While every worm industriously weaves
And winds his web about the rivelled leaves,
So numerous are the follies that annoy
The mind and heart of every sprightly boy;
Imaginations noxious and perverse,
Which admonition can alone disperse.
The encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,
Patient, affectionate, of high command,
To check the procreation of a breed
Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.
'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page,
At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage;
Even in his pastimes he requires a friend
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend,
O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,
Watch his emotions and control their tide,
And levying thus, and with an easy sway,
A tax of profit from his very play,
To impress a value, not to be erased,
On moments squandered else, and running all to waste.
And seems it nothing in a father's eye
That unimproved those many moments fly?
And is he well content his son should find
No nourishment to feed his growing mind,
But conjugated verbs, and nouns declined?
For such is all the mental food purveyed
By public hackneys in the schooling trade;
Who feed a pupil's intellect with store
Of syntax truly, but with little more,
Dismiss their cares when they dismiss their flock,
Machines themselves, and governed by a clock.
Perhaps a father, blessed with any brains,

Would deem it no abuse, or waste of pains,
To improve this diet, at no great expense,
With savoury truth and wholesome common sense;
To lead his son for prospects of delight,
To some not steep, though philosophic, height,
Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes
Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size,
The moon of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,
And the harmonious order of them all;
To show him in an insect, or a flower,
Such microscopic proof of skill and power,
As, hid from ages passed, God now displays
To combat atheists with in modern days;
To spread the earth before him and commend,
With designation of the finger's end,
Its various parts to his attentive note,
Thus bringing home to him the most remote;
To teach his heart to glow with generous flame,
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame;
And more than all, with commendation due,
To set some living worthy in his view,
Whose fair example may at once inspire
A wish to copy what he must admire.
Such knowledge, gained betimes, and which appears,
Though solid, not too weighty for his years,
Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport,
When health demands it, of athletic sort,
Would make him what some lovely boys have been,
And more than one perhaps that I have seen,
An evidence and reprehension both
Of the mere schoolboy's lean and tardy growth.
Art thou a man professionally tied,
With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,
Too busy to intend a meaner care
Than how to enrich thyself, and next, thine heir?
Or art thou (as, though rich, perhaps thou art)
But poor in knowledge, having none to impart?
Behold that figure, neat though plainly clad,
His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad;
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then
Heard to articulate like other men,
No jester, and yet lively in discourse,
His phrase well-chosen, clear, and full of force,
And his address, if not quite French in ease,
Not English stiff, but frank and form'd to please,
Low in the world, because he scorns its arts,
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts,
Unpatronized, and therefore little known,

Wise for himself and his few friends alone—
In him thy well-appointed proxy see,
Armed for a work too difficult for thee;
Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,
To form thy son, to strike his genius forth,
Beneath thy roof, beneath thy eye, to prove
The force of discipline when backed by love.
To double all thy pleasure in thy child,
His mind informed, his morals undefiled.
Safe under such a wing, the boy shall show
No spots contracted among grooms below,
Nor taint his speech with meannesses, designed
By footman Tom for witty and refined.
There in his commerce with the liveried herd,
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be feared;
For since (so fashion dictates) all, who claim
A higher than a mere plebeian fame,
Find it expedient, come what mischief may,
To entertain a thief or two in pay,
And they that can afford the expense of more,
Some half a dozen, and some half a score,
Great cause occurs to save him from a band
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand,
A point secured, if once he be supplied
With some such Mentor always at his side.
Are such men rare? perhaps they would abound
Were occupation easier to be found,
Were education, else so sure to fail,
Conducted on a manageable scale,
And schools that have outlived all just esteem,
Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme.—
But having found him, be thou Duke or Earl,
Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,
And as thou wouldst the advancement of thine heir
In all good faculties beneath his care,
Respect, as is but rational and just,
A man deemed worthy of so dear a trust.
Despised by thee, what more can he expect
From youthful folly, than the same neglect?
A flat and fatal negative obtains
That instant, upon all his future pains;
His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,
And all the instructions of thy son's best friend
Are a stream choked, or trickling to no end.
Doom him not then to solitary meals,
But recollect that he has sense, and feels,
And that, possessor of a soul refined,
An upright heart, and cultivated mind.

His post not mean, his talents not unknown,
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.
And if admitted at thy board he sit,
Account him no just mark for idle wit,
Offend not him, whom modesty restrains
From repartee, with jokes that he disdains,
Much less transfix his feelings with an oath,
Nor frown unless he vanish with the cloth.—
And trust me, his utility may reach
To more than he is hired or bound to teach,
Much trash unuttered, and some ills undone,
Through reverence of the censor of thy son.
But, if thy table be indeed unclean,
Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,
And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan,
The world accounts an honourable man,
Because forsooth thy courage has been tried
And stood the test, perhaps on the wrong side;
Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove
That anything but vice could win thy love;—
Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,
Chained to the routs that she frequents for life;
Who, just when industry begins to snore,
Flies, winged with joy, to some coach-crowded door;
And thrice in every winter throngs thine own
With half the chariots and sedans in town,
Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou mayst,
Not very sober though, nor very chaste;—
Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,
If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,
And thou at best, and in thy soberest mood,
A trifler vain, and empty of all good?
Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,
Hear Nature plead, show mercy to thy son,
Saved from his home, where every day brings forth
Some mischief fatal to his future worth,
Find him a better in a distant spot,
Within some pious pastor's humble cot,
Where vile example (yours I chiefly mean,
The most seducing, and the oftenest seen)
May never more be stamped upon his breast,
Not yet perhaps incurably impressed.
Where early rest makes early rising sure,
Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,
Prevented much by diet neat and plain;
Or if it enter, soon starved out again:
Where all the attention of his faithful host.
Discreetly limited to two at most,

May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,
And not at last evaporate in air:
Where, stillness aiding study, and his mind,
Serene, and to his duties much inclined,
Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,
Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,
His virtuous toil may terminate at last
In settled habit and decided taste.—
But whom do I advise? the fashion-led,
The incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead!
Whom care and cool deliberation suit
Not better much than spectacles a brute;
Who if their sons some slight tuition share,
Deem it of no great moment whose, or where;
Too proud to adopt the thoughts of one unknown,
And much too gay to have any of their own.
But courage, man! methought the Muse replied,
Mankind are various, and the world is wide:
The ostrich, silliest of the feathered kind,
And formed of God without a parent's mind,
Commits her eggs, incautious, to the dust,
Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust;
And while on public nurseries they rely,
Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,
Irrational in what they thus prefer,
No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.
But all are not alike. Thy warning voice
May here and there prevent erroneous choice;
And some perhaps, who, busy as they are,
Yet make their progeny their dearest care
(Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may reach
Their offspring, left upon so wild a beach),
Will need no stress of argument to enforce
The expedience of a less adventurous course:
The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn;
But *they* have human feelings—turn to *them*.
To you, then, tenants of life's middle state,
Securely placed between the small and great,
Whose character, yet undebauched, retains
Two-thirds of all the virtue that remains,
Who, wise yourselves, desire your sons should learn
Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.
Look round you on a world perversely blind;
See what contempt is fallen on humankind;
See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced,
Great titles, offices, and trusts disgraced,
Long lines of ancestry, renowned of old,
Their noble qualities all quenched and cold;

See Bedlam's closeted and handcuffed charge
Surpassed in frenzy by the mad at large;
See great commanders making war a trade,
Great lawyers, lawyers without study made:
Churchmen, in whose esteem their best employ
Is odious, and their wages all their joy,
Who far enough from furnishing their shelves
With Gospel lore, turn infidels themselves;
See womanhood despised, and manhood shamed
With infamy too nauseous to be named,
Fops at all corners, ladylike in mien,
Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen,
Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue
On fire with curses and with nonsense hung,
Now flushed with drunkenness, now with whoredom pale,
Their breath a sample of last night's regale;
See volunteers in all the vilest arts,
Men well endowed, of honourable parts,
Designed by Nature wise, but self-made fools;
All these, and more like these, were bred at schools.
And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,
That though school-bred the boy be virtuous still,
Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,
Prove, rather than impeach, the just remark,
As here and there a twinkling star descried
Serves but to show how black is all beside.
Now look on him, whose very voice in tone
Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,
And stroke his polished cheek of purest red,
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,
And say,—"My boy, the unwelcome hour is come,
"When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,
"Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,
"And trust for safety to a stranger's care.
"What character, what turn thou wilt assume
"From constant converse with I know not whom;
"Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,
"And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose;
"Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,
"Is all chance-medley, and unknown to me."
Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,
And while the dreadful risk foreseen forbids;
Free, too, and under no constraining force,
Unless the sway of custom warp thy course;
Lay such a stake upon the losing side,
Merely to gratify so blind a guide?
Thou canst not! Nature, pulling at thine heart,
Condemns the unfatherly, the imprudent part.

Thou wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tenderest plea,
Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,
Nor say,—"Go thither;"—conscious that there lay
A brood of asps, or quicksands, in his way;
Then, only governed by the self-same rule
Of natural pity, send him not to school.
No!—guard him better. Is he not thine own,
Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone?
And hopest thou not ('tis every father's hope)
That since thy strength must with thy years elope,
And thou wilt need some comfort to assuage
Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,
That then, in recompense of all thy cares,
Thy child shall show respect to thy gray hairs,
Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,
And give thy life its only cordial left?
Aware then how much danger intervenes,
To compass that good end, forecast the means.
His heart, now passive, yields to thy command;
Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand.
If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,
Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,
Complain not if attachments lewd and base
Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place.
But if thou guard its sacred chambers sure
From vicious inmates and delights impure,
Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,
And keep him warm and filial to the last;
Or if he prove unkind (as who can say,
But being man, and therefore frail, he may)
One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart;—
Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.
"Oh, barbarous! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand
Pull down the schools—what!—all the schools i' th' land;
Or throw them up to livery-nags and grooms,
Or turn them into shops and auction-rooms?"
A captious question, sir, and yours is one,
Deserves an answer similar, or none.
Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ
(Apprised that he is such) a careless boy,
And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,
Merely to sleep, and let them run astray?
Survey our schools and colleges, and see
A sight not much unlike my simile.
From education, as the leading cause,
The public character its colour draws;
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.

And, though I would not advertise them yet,
Nor write on each—"This building to be let,"
Unless the world were all prepared to embrace
A plan well worthy to supply their place;
Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,
To cultivate and keep the MORALS clean
(Forgive the crime), I wish them, I confess,
Or better managed, or encouraged less.



Miscellaneous Poems.

1779 TO 1799.

A TALE, FOUNDED ON A FACT,

WHICH HAPPENED IN JANUARY, 1779.

WHERE Humber pours his rich commercial stream,
There dwelt a wretch, who breathed but to blaspheme;
In subterraneous caves his life he led,
Black as the mine in which he wrought for bread.
When on a day, emerging from the deep,
A Sabbath-day (such sabbaths thousands keep!)
The wages of his weekly toil he bore
To buy a cock—whose blood might win him more;
As if the noblest of the feathered kind
Were but for battle and for death designed;
As if the consecrated hours were meant
For sport, to minds on cruelty intent;
It chanced (such chances Providence obey)
He met a fellow-labourer on the way,
Whose heart the same desires had once enflamed;
But now the savage temper was reclaimed.
Persuasion on his lips had taken place;
For all plead well who plead the cause of Grace.
His iron heart with scripture he assailed,
Wooed him to hear a sermon, and prevailed.
His faithful bow the mighty preacher drew,
Swift as the lightning-glimpse the arrow flew;
He wept; he trembled; cast his eyes around,
To find a worse than he; but none he found.
He felt his sins, and wondered he should feel;
Grace made the wound, and Grace alone could heal.
  Now farewell oaths, and blasphemies, and lies!
He quits the sinner's for the martyr's prize.
That holy day was washed with many a tear,
Gilded with hope, yet shaded too by fear.
The next, his swarthy brethren of the mine
Learned, by his altered speech, the change divine!
Laughed when they should have wept, and swore the day
Was nigh when he would swear as fast as they.

"No," said the penitent, "such words shall share
This breath no more; devoted now to prayer.
Oh! if Thou seest (Thine eye the future sees)
That I shall yet again blaspheme, like these;
Now strike me to the ground on which I kneel,
Ere yet this heart relapses into steel;
Now take me to that Heaven I once defied,
Thy presence, Thy embrace!"—He spoke, and died!

THE PINEAPPLE AND THE BEE.

1779.

The pineapples, in triple row,
Were basking hot, and all in blow.
A bee of most deserving taste
Perceived the fragrance as he pass'd,
On eager wing the spoiler came,
And search'd for crannies in the frame,
Urged his attempt on every side,
To every pane his trunk applied;
But still in vain, the frame was tight,
And only pervious to the light:
Thus having wasted half the day,
He trimm'd his flight another way.
  Methinks, I said, in thee I find
The sin and madness of mankind.
To joys forbidden man aspires,
Consumes his soul with vain desires;
Folly the spring of his pursuit,
And disappointment all the fruit.
While Cynthio ogles, as she passes,
The nymph between two chariot glasses,
She is the pineapple, and he
The silly unsuccessful bee.
The maid who views with pensive air
The showglass fraught with glittering ware,
Sees watches, bracelets, rings, and lockets,
But sighs at thought of empty pockets;
Like thine, her appetite is keen,
But ah, the cruel glass between!
  Our dear delights are often such,
Exposed to view, but not to touch;
The sight our foolish heart inflames,
We long for pineapples in frames;

With hopeless wish one looks and lingers;
One breaks the glass, and cuts his fingers;
But they whom Truth and Wisdom lead,
Can gather honey from a weed.

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED;

OR, HYPOCRISY DETECTED.*

Thus says the prophet of the Turk,
"Good Mussulman, abstain from pork;
There is a part in every swine
No friend or follower of mine
May taste, whate'er his inclination,
On pain of excommunication."
Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,
And thus he left the point at large.
[Had he the sinful part expressed,
They might with safety eat the rest;
But for one piece they thought it hard
From the whole hog to be debarred;
And set their wit at work to find
What joint the prophet had in mind.]†
Much controversy straight arose,
These choose the back, the belly those;
By some 'tis confidently said
He meant not to forbid the head;
While others at that doctrine rail,
And piously prefer the tail.
Thus, conscience freed from every clog,
Mahometans eat up the hog.
You laugh—'tis well—the tale applied
May make you laugh on t'other side.
"Renounce the world"—the preacher cries.
"We do"—a multitude replies.
While one as innocent regards
A snug and friendly game at cards;
And one, whatever you may say,
Can see no evil in a play;
Some love a concert, or a race;
And others shooting, and the chase.

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* It may be proper to inform the reader that this piece has already appeared in print, having found its way, though with some unnecessary additions by an unknown hand, into the *Leeds Journal*, without the author's privity.—(C. 1782.)

† The lines between the brackets were added by Newton.

Reviled and loved, renounced and followed,
Thus, bit by bit, the world is swallowed;
Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,
Yet likes a slice as well as he:
With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,
Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten.

ON THE PROMOTION OF EDWARD THURLOW, ESQ.,

TO THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLORSHIP OF ENGLAND.*

1779.

ROUND Thurlow's head in early youth,
  And in his sportive days,
Fair Science pour'd the light of truth,
  And Genius shed its rays.

See! with united wonder cried
  The experienced and the sage,
Ambition in a boy supplied
  With all the skill of age!

Discernment, eloquence, and grace,
  Proclaim him born to sway
The balance in the highest place,
  And bear the palm away.

The praise bestow'd was just and wise;
  He sprang impetuous forth,
Secure of conquest, where the prize
  Attends superior worth.

So the best courser on the plain
  Ere yet he starts is known,
And does but at the goal obtain
  What all had deem'd his own.

THE MODERN PATRIOT.

REBELLION is my theme all day;
  I only wish 'twould come
(As who knows but perhaps it may?)
  A little nearer home.

---

* Thurlow was fellow clerk with Cowper, at Mr. Chapman's, the solicitor, Ely-place, Holborn

Yon roaring boys, who rave and fight
On t'other side the Atlantic,
I always held them in the right,
But most so when most frantic.

When lawless mobs insult the court,
That man shall be my toast,
If breaking windows be the sport,
Who bravely breaks the most.

But oh! for him my fancy culls
The choicest flowers she bears,
Who constitutionally pulls
Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,
Though some folks can't endure them,
Who say the mob are mad outright,
And that a rope must cure them.

A rope! I wish we patriots had
Such strings for all who need 'em—
What? hang a man for going mad!
Then farewell British freedom.

THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOWWORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
Hath cheer'd the village with his song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When, looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glowworm by his spark;
So stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent:—
"Did you admire my lamp," quoth he,
"As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong,
As much as I to spoil your song;
For 'twas the self-same power Divine
Taught you to sing, and me to shine

That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify and cheer the night."
The songster heard his short oration,
And, warbling out his approbation,
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.
Hence jarring sectaries may learn
Their real interest to discern;
That brother should not war with brother,
And worry and devour each other;
But sing and shine with sweet consent,
Till life's poor transient night is spent,
Respecting in each other's case
The gifts of nature and of grace.
Those Christians best deserve the name,
Who studiously make peace their aim;
Peace both the duty and the prize
Of him that creeps and him that flies.

THE RAVEN.

1780.

A RAVEN, while with glossy breast
Her new-laid eggs she fondly press'd,
And, on her wicker-work high mounted,
Her chickens prematurely counted,
(A fault philosophers might blame,
If quite exempted from the same,)
Enjoy'd at ease the genial day;
'Twas April, as the bumpkins say,
The legislature call'd it May.*
But suddenly a wind, as high
As ever swept a winter sky,
Shook the young leaves about her ears,
And fill'd her with a thousand fears,
Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,
And spread her golden hopes below.
But just at eve the blowing weather
And all her fears were hush'd together;
"And now," quoth poor unthinking Ralph,
"'Tis over, and the brood is safe;"

* Alluding to the change of style, by which, in 1752, eleven days were deducted from the year. It was long before the peasantry would accept the advanced dates

(For ravens, though, as birds of omen,
They teach both conjurers and old women
To tell us what is to befall,
Can't prophesy themselves at all.)
The morning came, when neighbour Hodge,
Who long had mark'd her airy lodge,
And destined all the treasure there
A gift to his expecting fair,
Climb'd like a squirrel to his dray,
And bore the worthless prize away.

MORAL.

'Tis Providence alone secures
In every change both mine and yours:
Safety consists not in escape
From dangers of a frightful shape;
An earthquake may be bid to spare
The man that's strangled by a hair.
Fate steals along with silent tread,
Found oftenest in what least we dread,
Frowns in the storm with angry brow,
But in the sunshine strikes the blow.

THE DOVES.*

Reasoning at every step he treads,
Man yet mistakes his way,
While meaner things, whom instinct leads,
Are rarely known to stray.

One silent eve I wander'd late,
And heard the voice of love;
The turtle thus address'd her mate,
And soothed the listening dove:

"Our mutual bond of faith and truth
No time shall disengage,
Those blessings of our early youth,
Shall cheer our latest age:

"While innocence without disguise,
And constancy sincere,
Shall fill the circles of those eyes,
And mine can read them there;

* Probably Mr. and Mrs. Bull. He sent the fable in a letter to Mrs. Newton.

"Those ills, that wait on all below,
  Shall ne'er be felt by me,
Or gently felt, and only so,
  As being shared by thee.

"When lightnings flash among the trees,
  Or kites are hovering near,
I fear lest thee alone they seize,
  And know no other fear.

"'Tis then I feel myself a wife,
  And press thy wedded side,
Resolved a union form'd for life
  Death never shall divide.

"But oh! if fickle and unchaste,
  (Forgive a transient thought,)
Thou couldst become unkind at last,
  And scorn thy present lot,

"No need of lightnings from on high,
  Or kites with cruel beak;
Denied the endearments of thine eye,
  This widow'd heart would break."

Thus sang the sweet sequester'd bird,
  Soft as the passing wind,
And I recorded what I heard,
  A lesson for mankind.

ON THE
BURNING OF LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY,
TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS., BY THE MOB IN THE MONTH OF JUNE, 1780.

So then—the Vandals of our isle,
  Sworn foes to sense and law,
Have burnt to dust a nobler pile
  Than ever Roman saw!

And Murray sighs o'er Pope and Swift,
  And many a treasure more,
The well-judged purchase, and the gift
  That graced his letter'd store.

Their pages mangled, burnt, and torn,
  The loss was his alone;
But ages yet to come shall mourn
  The burning of his own.

ON THE SAME.

When wit and genius meet their doom
In all-devouring flame,
They tell us of the fate of Rome,
And bid us fear the same.

O'er Murray's loss the muses wept,
They felt the rude alarm,
Yet bless'd the guardian care that kept
His sacred head from harm.

There Memory, like the bee that's fed
From Flora's balmy store,
The quintessence of all he read
Had treasured up before.

The lawless herd, with fury blind,
Have done him cruel wrong;
The flowers are gone—but still we find
The honey on his tongue.

A RIDDLE.

I am just two and two, I am warm, I am cold,
And the parent of numbers that cannot be told,
I am lawful, unlawful—a duty, a fault—
I am often sold dear, good for nothing when bought,
An extraordinary boon, and a matter of course,
And yielded with pleasure—when taken by force.

TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON,

ON HIS RETURN FROM RAMSGATE.

(Written in October, 1780.)

That ocean you have late survey'd,
Those rocks I too have seen,
But I, afflicted and dismay'd,
You, tranquil and serene.

You from the flood-controlling steep
Saw stretch'd before your view,
With conscious joy, the threatening deep,
No longer such to you.

To me the waves, that ceaseless broke
Upon the dangerous coast,
Hoarsely and ominously spoke
Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have past,
And found the peaceful shore;
I, tempest-toss'd, and wreck'd at last,
Come home to part no more.

ON A GOLDFINCH,

STARVED TO DEATH IN HIS CAGE.

Time was when I was free as air,
The thistle's downy seed my fare,
My drink the morning dew;
I perch'd at will on every spray,
My form genteel, my plumage gay,
My strains for ever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,
And form genteel were all in vain,
And of a transient date;
For, caught, and caged, and starved to death,
In dying sighs my little breath
Soon pass'd the wiry grate.

Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,
And thanks for this effectual close
And cure of every ill!
More cruelty could none express;
And I, if you had shown me less,
Had been your prisoner still.

REPORT OF AN ADJUDGED CASE.

NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE BOOKS.

Between Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning;
While Chief-Baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

"In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
And your lordship," he said, "will undoubtedly find,
That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind."

Then holding the spectacles up to the court—
"Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle,
As wide as the ridge of the Nose is; in short,
Design'd to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

"Again, would your lordship a moment suppose
('Tis a case that has happen'd, and may be again)
That the visage or countenance had not a Nose,
Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then?

"On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them."

Then shifting his side (as a lawyer knows how),
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes:
But what were his arguments few people know,
For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed with a grave solemn tone,
Decisive and clear, without one if or but—
"That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut!"

A CARD.

Poor Vestris, grieved beyond all measure,
To have incurred so much displeasure,
Although a Frenchman, disconcerted,
And though light-heeled, yet heavy-hearted,
Begs humbly to inform his friends,
Next first of April he intends
To take a boat and row right down
To Cuckold's-Point from Richmond town;
And as he goes, alert and gay,
Leap all the bridges in his way.
The boat, borne downward with the tide,
Shall catch him safe on t'other side.
He humbly hopes by this expedient
To prove himself their most obedient,
(Which shall be always his endeavour),
And jump into the former favour.

ON THE HIGH PRICE OF FISH.*

1781.

Cocoa-nut naught,
  Fish too dear,
None must be bought
  For us that are here:

No lobster on earth,
  That ever I saw,
To me would be worth
  Sixpence a claw.

So, dear Madam, wait
  Till fish can be got
At a reasonable rate,
  Whether lobster or not;

Till the French and the Dutch
  Have quitted the seas,
And then send as much
  And as oft as you please.

TO MRS. NEWTON,

ON RECEIVING A BARREL OF OYSTERS.

A noble theme demands a noble verse,
In such I thank you for your fine oys*ters*.
The barrel was magnificently large,
But, being sent to Olney at free charge,
Was not inserted in the driver's list,
And therefore overlook'd, forgot, or miss'd;
For, when the messenger whom we dispatch'd
Inquired for the oysters, Hob his noddle scratched;
Denying that his waggon or his wain
Did any such commodity contain.
In consequence of which, your welcome boon
Did not arrive till yesterday at noon;
In consequence of which some chanced to die,
And some, though very sweet, were very dry.
Now Madam says (and what she says must still
Deserve attention, say she what she will),

* On receiving a basket of fish from Mrs. Newton; intended to dissuade her from sending more till they were cheaper.

That what we call the diligence, be-case
It goes to London with a swifter pace,
Would better suit the carriage of your gift,
Returning downward with a pace as swift;
And therefore recommends it with this aim—
To save at least three days,—the price the same;
For though it will not carry or convey
For less than twelvepence, send whate'er you may,
For oysters bred upon the salt sea-shore,
Pack'd in a barrel, they will charge no more.
News have I none that I can deign to write,
Save that it rained prodigiously last night;
And that ourselves were, at the seventh hour,
Caught in the first beginning of the shower;
But walking, running, and with much ado,
Got home—just time enough to be wet through;
Yet both are well, and, wondrous to be told,
Soused as we were, we yet have caught no cold;
And wishing just the same good hap to you,
We say, good Madam, and good Sir, adieu!

EPIGRAM.

1781.

If John marries Mary, and Mary alone,
'Tis a very good match between Mary and John.
Should John wed a score, oh the claws and the scratches!
It can't be a match:—'tis a bundle of matches.*

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Dear President, whose art sublime
Gives perpetuity to time,
And bids transactions of a day,
That fleeting hours would waft away
To dark futurity, survive,
And in unfading beauty live,—
You cannot with a grace decline
A special mandate of the Nine—
Yourself, whatever task you choose,
So much indebted to the Muse.

Thus say the sisterhood: We come,
Fix well your palette on your thumb,
Prepare the pencil and the tints—
We come to furnish you with hints.
French disappointment, British glory,
Must be the subject of the story.
First strike a curve, a graceful bow,
Then slope it to a point below;
Your outline easy, airy, light,

* One of the epigrams suggested by the *Thelyphthora*.

Fill'd up becomes a paper kite.
Let independence, sanguine, horrid,
Blaze like a meteor in the forehead:
Beneath (but lay aside your graces)
Draw six-and-twenty rueful faces,
Each with a staring, stedfast eye,
Fix'd on his great and good ally.
France flies the kite—'tis on the wing—
Britannia's lightning cuts the string.
The wind that raised it, ere it ceases,
Just rends it into thirteen pieces,
Takes charge of every fluttering sheet,
And lays them all at George's feet.
Iberia, trembling from afar,
Renounces the confederate war;
Her efforts and her arts o'ercome,
France calls her shatter'd navies home.
Repenting Holland learns to mourn
The sacred treaties she has torn;
Astonishment and awe profound
Are stamp'd upon the nations round;
Without one friend, above all foes,
Britannia gives the world repose.

A POETICAL EPISTLE TO LADY AUSTEN.

DEAR Anna—between friend and friend,
Prose answers every common end;
Serves, in a plain and homely way,
To express the occurrence of the day;
Our health, the weather, and the news,
What walks we take, what books we choose,
And all the floating thoughts we find
Upon the surface of the mind.
But when a poet takes the pen,
Far more alive than other men,
He feels a gentle tingling come
Down to his finger and his thumb,
Derived from nature's noblest part,
The centre of a glowing heart:
And this is what the world, who knows
No flights above the pitch of prose,
His more sublime vagaries slighting,
Denominates an itch for writing.
No wonder I, who scribble rhyme
To catch the triflers of the time,
And tell them truths divine and clear,
Which, couch'd in prose, they will not hear;
Who labour hard to allure and draw
The loiterers I never saw,
Should feel that itching and that tingling
With all my purpose intermingling,
To your intrinsic merit true,
When call'd to address myself to you.
Mysterious are His ways, whose power
Brings forth that unexpected hour,
When minds, that never met before,
Shall meet, unite, and part no more:
It is the allotment of the skies,
The hand of the Supremely Wise,
That guides and governs our affections,
And plans and orders our connexions:
Directs us in our distant road,
And marks the bounds of our abode.
Thus we were settled when you found us,
Peasants and children all around us,
Not dreaming of so dear a friend,
Deep in the abyss of Silver-End.*
Thus Martha,† even against her will,
Perch'd on the top of yonder hill;
And you, though you must needs prefer
The fairer scenes of Sweet Sancerre,‡

* A by-part of Olney.
† Mrs. Jones, Lady Austen's sister, who lived at Clifton Reynes. She was the wife of the Rev. T. Jones.
‡ Lady Austen's place in France.

Are come from distant Loire, to
choose
A cottage on the banks of Ouse.
This page of Providence quite new,
And now just opening to our view,
Employs our present thoughts and
pains
To guess and spell what it contains:
But day by day, and year by year,
Will make the dark enigma clear;
And furnish us, perhaps, at last,
Like other scenes already past,
With proof, that we, and our affairs,
Are part of a Jehovah's cares;
For God unfolds by slow degrees
The purport of His deep decrees;
Sheds every hour a clearer light
In aid of our defective sight;
And spreads, at length, before the
soul,
A beautiful and perfect whole,
Which busy man's inventive brain
Toils to anticipate, in vain.
Say, Anna, had you never known
The beauties of a rose full blown,
Could you, though luminous your eye,
By looking on the bud descry,
Or guess, with a prophetic power,
The future splendour of the flower?
Just so, the Omnipotent, who turns
The system of a world's concerns,
From mere minutiæ can educe
Events of most important use,
And bid a dawning sky display
The blaze of a meridian day.
The works of man tend, one and all,
As needs they must, from great to
small;
And vanity absorbs at length
The monuments of human strength.
But who can tell how vast the plan
Which this day's incident began?
Too small, perhaps, the slight
occasion
For our dim-sighted observation;
It pass'd unnoticed, as the bird
That cleaves the yielding air unheard,
And yet may prove when understood
An harbinger of endless good.
Not that I deem, or mean to call
Friendship a blessing cheap or small:
But merely to remark, that ours,
Like some of Nature's sweetest
flowers,
Rose from a seed of tiny size,
That seem'd to promise no such
prize;
A transient visit intervening,
And made almost without a meaning,
(Hardly the effect of inclination,
Much less of pleasing expectation,)
Produced a friendship, then begun,
That has cemented us in one;
And placed it in our power to prove,
By long fidelity and love,
That Solomon has wisely spoken,—
"A threefold cord is not soon broken."

TO LADY AUSTEN.*

WRITTEN IN RAINY WEATHER.

(August 12th, 1782.)

To watch the storms, and hear the sky
Give all our almanacs the lie;
To shake with cold and see the plains
In autumn drowned with wintry rains;
'Tis thus I spend my moments here,
And wish myself a Dutch Mynheer;

* Printed by himself.

I then should have no need of wit;
For lumpish Hollander unfit!
Nor should I then repine at mud,
Or meadows deluged by a flood;
But in a bog live well content,
And find it just my element;
Should be a clod and not a man,
Nor wish in vain for Sister Ann,
With charitable aid to drag
My mind out of its proper quag;
Should have the genius of a boor
And no ambition to have more.

HEROISM.

There was a time when Ætna's silent fire
Slept unperceived, the mountain yet entire;
When, conscious of no danger from below,
She towered a cloud-capped pyramid of snow.
No thunders shook with deep intestine sound
The blooming groves that girdled her around,
Her unctuous olives, and her purple vines,
(Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines)
The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assured,
In peace upon her sloping sides matured.
When on a day like that of the last doom,
A conflagration labouring in her womb,
She teemed and heaved with an infernal birth,
That shook the circling seas and solid earth.
Dark and voluminous the vapours rise,
And hang their horrors in the neighbouring skies,
While through the Stygian veil that blots the day,
In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.
But oh! what Muse, and in what powers of song,
Can trace the torrent as it burns along?
Havoc and devastation in the van,
It marches o'er the prostrate works of man—
Vines, olives, herbage, forests disappear,
And all the charms of a Sicilian year.
Revolving seasons, fruitless as they pass,
See it an uninformed and idle mass;
Without a soil to invite the tiller's care,
Or blade that might redeem it from Despair.
Yet Time at length (what will not Time achieve?)
Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live.
Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,
And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.

O bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats!
O charming Paradise of shortlived sweets!
The self-same gale that wafts the fragrance round,
Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound:
Again the mountain feels the imprisoned foe,
Again pours ruin on the vale below,
Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,
That only future ages can restore.
Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honour draws,
Who write in blood the merits of your cause,
Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence,
Glory your aim, but Justice your pretence;
Behold in Ætna's emblematic fires,
The mischiefs your ambitious Pride inspires!
Fast by the stream that bounds your just domain,
And tells you where ye have a right to reign,
A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,
Studious of peace, their neighbours' and their own.
Ill fated race! how deeply must they rue
Their only crime, vicinity to you!
The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,
Through the ripe harvest lies their destined road;
At every step beneath their feet they tread
The life of multitudes, a nation's bread!
Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress
Before them, and behind a wilderness;
Famine, and Pestilence, her firstborn son,
Attend to finish what the sword begun;
And echoing praises, such as fiends might earn,
And Folly pays, resound at your return.
A calm succeeds—but Plenty, with her train
Of heartfelt joys, succeeds not soon again;
And years of pining indigence must show
What scourges are the gods that rule below.
Yet man, laborious man, by slow degrees,
(Such is his thirst of opulence and ease)
Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,
Gleans up the refuse of the general spoil,
Rebuilds the towers that smoked upon the plain,
And the sun gilds the shining spires again.
Increasing commerce and reviving art
Renew the quarrel on the conqueror's part;
And the sad lesson must be learned once more,
That wealth within is ruin at the door.
What are ye, monarchs, laurelled heroes, say,
But Ætnas of the suffering world ye sway?
Sweet Nature, stripped of her embroidered robe,
Deplores the wasted regions of her globe,

And stands a witness at Truth's awful bar,
To prove you there destroyers, as ye are.
O place me in some Heaven-protected isle,
Where Peace, and Equity, and Freedom smile;
Where no volcano pours his fiery flood
No crested warrior dips his plume in blood;
Where Power secures what Industry has won;
Where to succeed is not to be undone;
A land that distant tyrants hate in vain,
In Britain's isle, beneath a George's reign.

THE FLATTING MILL.

AN ILLUSTRATION.

When a bar of pure silver or ingot of gold
Is sent to be flatted or wrought into length,
It is pass'd between cylinders often, and roll'd
In an engine of utmost mechanical strength.

Thus tortured and squeezed, at last it appears
Like a loose heap of ribbon, a glittering show,
Like music it tinkles and rings in your ears,
And warm'd by the pressure is all in a glow.

This process achieved, it is doom'd to sustain
The thump after thump of a gold-beater's mallet,
And at last is of service in sickness or pain
To cover a pill for a delicate palate.

Alas for the poet! who dares undertake
To urge reformation of national ill—
His head and his heart are both likely to ache
With the double employment of mallet and mill.

If he wish to instruct, he must learn to delight,
Smooth, ductile, and even, his fancy must flow,
Must tinkle and glitter like gold to the sight,
And catch in its progress a sensible glow.

After all, he must beat it as thin and as fine
As the leaf that enfolds what an invalid swallows;
For truth is unwelcome, however divine,
And unless you adorn it, nausea follows.

FROM A LETTER TO THE REV. MR. NEWTON,

RECTOR OF ST. MARY WOOLNOTH.

(May 28th, 1782.)

SAYS the pipe to the snuff-box, "I can't understand
What the ladies and gentlemen see in your face,
That you are in fashion all over the land,
And I am so much fallen into disgrace.

"Do but see what a pretty contemplative air
I give to the company,—pray do but note 'em,—
You would think that the wise men of Greece were all there,
Or, at least, would suppose them the wise men of Gotham.

"My breath is as sweet as the breath of blown roses,
While you are a nuisance where'er you appear;
There is nothing but snivelling and blowing of noses,
Such a noise as turns any man's stomach to hear."

Then, lifting his lid in a delicate way,
And opening his mouth with a smile quite engaging,
The box in reply was heard plainly to say,
"What a silly dispute is this we are waging!

"If you have a little of merit to claim,
You may thank the sweet-smelling Virginian weed;
And I, if I seem to deserve any blame,
The beforemention'd drug in apology plead.

"Thus neither the praise nor the blame is our own,
No room for a sneer, much less a cachinnus;
We are vehicles, not of tobacco alone,
But of anything else they may choose to put in us."

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.*

(June 22nd, 1782.)

MY DEAR FRIEND,
If reading verse be your delight,
'Tis mine as much, or more to write;
But what we would, so weak is man,
Lies oft remote from what we can.
For instance, at this very time
I feel a wish by cheerful rhyme
To soothe my friend, and, had I power,
To cheat him of an anxious hour;
Not meaning (for I must confess,
It were but folly to suppress)
His pleasure or his good alone,
But squinting partly at my own.

* An Independent Minister who resided at Newport Pagnall, five miles from Olney.

But though the sun is flaming high
In the centre of yon arch, the sky,
And he had once (and who but he?)
The name for setting genius free,
Yet whether poets of past days
Yielded him undeservèd praise,
And he by no uncommon lot
Was famed for virtues he had not;
Or whether, which is like enough,
His Highness may have taken huff,
So seldom sought with invocation,
Since it has been the reigning fashion
To disregard his inspiration,
I seem no brighter in my wits,
For all the radiance he emits,
Than if I saw through midnight
vapour,
The glimmering of a farthing taper.
Oh for a succedaneum, then,
To accelerate a creeping pen!
Oh for a ready succedaneum,
Quod caput, cerebrum, et cranium
Pondere liberet exoso,
Et morbo jam caliginoso!
'Tis here; this oval box well fill'd
With best tobacco, finely mill'd,
Beats all Anticyra's pretences
To disengage the encumber'd senses.
Oh Nymph of transatlantic fame,
Where'er thine haunt, whate'er thy
name,
Whether reposing on the side
Of Oroonoquo's spacious tide,
Or listening with delight not small
To Niagara's distant fall,
'Tis thine to cherish and to feed
The pungent nose-refreshing weed,
Which, whether pulverised it gain
A speedy passage to the brain,
Or, whether, touch'd with fire, it rise
In circling eddies to the skies,
Does thought more quicken and
refine
Than all the breath of all the Nine—
Forgive the bard, if bard he be,
Who once too wantonly made free,
To touch with a satiric wipe
That symbol of thy power, the pipe;
So may no blight infest thy plains
And no unseasonable rains;
And so may smiling peace once more
Visit America's sad shore;
And thou secure from all alarms,
Of thundering drums and glittering
arms,
Rove unconfined beneath the shade
Thy wide expanded leaves have made;
So may thy votaries increase,
And fumigation never cease.
May Newton with renew'd delights
Perform thy odoriferous rites,
While clouds of incense half divine
Involve thy disappearing shrine:
And so may smoke-inhaling Bull
Be always filling, never full.

FRIENDSHIP.

AMICITIA NISI INTER BONOS ESSE NON POTEST.—*Cicero.*

WHAT virtue, or what mental grace,
But men unqualified and base
Will boast it their possession?
Profusion apes the noble part
Of liberality of heart,
And dulness of discretion.

If every polish'd gem we find,
Illuminating heart or mind,
Provoke to imitation,
No wonder friendship does the same,
That jewel of the purest flame,
Or rather constellation.

No knave but boldly will pretend
The requisites that form a friend,
A real and a sound one;
Nor any fool he would deceive
But prove as ready to believe,
And dream that he had found one.

Candid, and generous, and just,
Boys care but little whom they trust,
An error soon corrected,—
For who but learns in riper years
That man, when smoothest he appears,
Is most to be suspected?

But here again a danger lies,
Lest, having misapplied our eyes,
And taken trash for treasure,
We should unwarily conclude
Friendship a false ideal good,
A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare
Is yet no subject of despair;
Nor is it wise complaining,
If either on forbidden ground,
Or where it was not to be found,
We sought without attaining.

No friendship will abide the test,
That stands on sordid interest,
Or mean self-love erected;
Nor such as may a while subsist
Between the sot and sensualist,
For vicious ends connected.

Who seeks a friend, should come disposed
To exhibit in full bloom disclosed
The graces and the beauties
That form the character he seeks;
For 'tis a union that bespeaks
Reciprocated duties.

Mutual attention is implied,
And equal truth on either side,
And constantly supported;
'Tis senseless arrogance to accuse
Another of sinister views,
Our own as much distorted.

But will sincerity suffice?
It is indeed above all price,
And must be made the basis;
But every virtue of the soul
Must constitute the charming whole,
All shining in their places.

A fretful temper will divide
The closest knot that may be tied,
By ceaseless sharp corrosion;
A temper passionate and fierce
May suddenly your joys disperse
At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite
In hopes of permanent delight;
The secret just committed,
Forgetting its important weight,
They drop through mere desire to prate,
And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,
If envy chance to creep in;
An envious man, if you succeed,
May prove a dangerous foe indeed,
But not a friend worth keeping.

As envy pines at good possess'd,
So jealousy looks forth distress'd
On good that seems approaching,
And if success his steps attend,
Discerns a rival in a friend,
And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name,
(Unless belied by common fame,)
Are sadly prone to quarrel,
To deem the wit a friend displays
A tax upon their own just praise,
And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renown'd for repartee
Will seldom scruple to make free
With friendship's finest feeling,
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,
And say he wounded you in jest,
By way of balm for healing.

Who ever keeps an open ear
For tattlers will be sure to hear
The trumpet of contention;
Aspersion is the babbler's trade,
To listen is to lend him aid,
And rush into dissension.

A friendship that in frequent fits
Of controversial rage emits
The sparks of disputation,
Like Hand-in-Hand insurance plates,
Most unavoidably creates
The thought of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul
True as a needle to the pole,
Their humour yet so various—
They manifest their whole life through
The needle's deviations too,
Their love is so precarious.

The great and small but rarely meet
On terms of amity complete;
Plebeians must surrender,
And yield so much to noble folk,
It is combining fire with smoke,
Obscurity with splendour.

Some are so placid and serene
(As Irish bogs are always green)
They sleep secure from waking;
And are indeed a bog, that bears
Your unparticipated cares
Unmoved and without quaking.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix
Their heterogeneous politics
Without an effervescence,
Like that of salts with lemon juice,
Which does not yet like that produce
A friendly coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,
And make a calm of human life;
But friends that chance to differ
On points which God has left at large,
How fiercely will they meet and charge!
No combatants are stiffer.

To prove at last my main intent
Needs no expense of argument,
No cutting and contriving—
Seeking a real friend we seem
To adopt the chemist's golden dream,
With still less hope of thriving.

Sometimes the fault is all our own,
Some blemish in due time made known
By trespass or omission:
Sometimes occasion brings to light
Our friend's defect, long hid from sight,
And even from suspicion.

Then judge yourself, and prove your man
As circumspectly as you can,
And, having made election,
Beware no negligence of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
Enfeeble his affection.

That secrets are a sacred trust,
That friends should be sincere and just,
That constancy befits them,
Are observations on the case,
That savour much of common place,
And all the world admits them.

But 'tis not timber, lead, and stone,
An architect requires alone
To finish a fine building—
The palace were but half complete,
If he could possibly forget
The carving and the gilding.

The man that hails you Tom or Jack,
And proves by thumps upon your back
How he esteems your merit,
Is such a friend, that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed
To pardon or to bear it.

As similarity of mind,
Or something not to be defined,
First fixes our attention;
So manners decent and polite,
The same we practised at first sight,
Must save it from declension.

Some act upon this prudent plan,
"Say little, and hear all you can."
Safe policy, but hateful—
So barren sands imbibe the shower,
But render neither fruit nor flower,
Unpleasant and ungrateful.

The man I trust, if shy to me,
Shall find me as reserved as he,
No subterfuge or pleading
Shall win my confidence again;
I will by no means entertain
A spy on my proceeding.

These samples—for alas! at last
These are but samples, and a taste
Of evils yet unmention'd—
May prove the task a task indeed
In which 'tis much if we succeed,
However well intention'd.

Pursue the search, and you will find
Good sense and knowledge of mankind
To be at least expedient,
And, after summing all the rest,
Religion ruling in the breast
A principal ingredient.

The noblest friendship ever shown
The Saviour's history makes known,
Though some have turn'd and turn'd it;
And, whether being crazed or blind,
Or seeking with a biass'd mind,
Have not, it seems, discern'd it.

O Friendship! if my soul forego
Thy dear delights while here below,
To mortify and grieve me,
May I myself at last appear
Unworthy, base, and insincere,
Or may my friend deceive me!

THE COLUBRIAD.*

CLOSE by the threshold of a door nail'd fast
Three kittens sat; each kitten look'd aghast;
I passing swift and inattentive by,
At the three kittens cast a careless eye,
Not much concern'd to know what they did there,
Not deeming kittens worth a poet's care.
But presently a loud and furious hiss
Caused me to stop, and to exclaim, "What's this?"
When lo! upon the threshold met my view,
With head erect, and eyes of fiery hue,
A viper, long as Count de Grasse's queue.†
Forth from his head his forkèd tongue he throws,
Darting it full against a kitten's nose,
Who having never seen in field or house
The like, sat still and silent as a mouse;
Only projecting with attention due,
Her whisker'd face, she ask'd him, "Who are you?"
On to the hall went I, with pace not slow,
But swift as lightning, for a long Dutch hoe,
With which, well-arm'd, I hasten'd to the spot,
To find the viper,—but I found him not.

* "Colubriad" is a mock heroic title from *Coluber*, a viper or snake.

† Count de Grasse was the French admiral defeated by Rodney, April 12th, 1782. He was famous for wearing a long queue turned up, and tied with ribbon. It was exaggerated in the caricatures of the day.

And, turning up the leaves and shrubs around,
Found only—that he was not to be found.
But still the kittens, sitting as before,
Sat watching close the bottom of the door.
"I hope," said I, "the villain I would kill
Has slipp'd between the door and the door-sill;
And if I make despatch and follow hard,
No doubt but I shall find him in the yard:"
For long ere now it should have been rehearsed,
'Twas in the garden that I found him first.
Even there I found him, there the full-grown cat
His head, with velvet paw, did gently pat,
As curious as the kittens erst had been
To learn what this phenomenon might mean.
Fill'd with heroic ardour at the sight,
And fearing every moment he would bite,
And rob our household of our only cat
That was of age to combat with a rat,
With outstretch'd hoe I slew him at the door,
And taught him NEVER TO COME THERE NO MORE.

EPITAPH ON A HARE.

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
Who, nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined,
Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took,
His pittance every night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
And milk, and oats, and straw;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
On pippins' russet peel,
And, when his juicy salads fail'd,
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round rolling moons
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade
He finds his long last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more agèd, feels the shocks
From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

Hic etiam jacet,
Qui totum novennium vixit,
Puss.
Siste paulisper,
Qui præteriturus es,
Et tecum sic reputa—
Hunc neque canis venaticus,
Nec plumbum missile,
Nec laqueus,
Nec imbres nimii,
Confecêre:
Tamen mortuus est—
Et moriar ego.

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE.

WRITTEN WHEN THE NEWS ARRIVED.*

TO THE MARCH IN SCIPIO.

Toll for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was over-set;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought;
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again
Full charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er;
And he and his eight hundred
Shall plough the wave no more

* The *Royal George*, 108 guns, was lost off Spithead, on the 29th of August, 1782. She was undergoing some repairs and was careened over, when a sudden gust of wind overset her and she sank. A great number of persons were on board at the time from Portsmouth. Two or three hundred bodies floated on shore, and were buried in Kingston Churchyard.

IN SUBMERSIONEM NAVIGII CUI, GEORGIUS REGALE NOMEN, INDITUM.

Plangimus fortes. Periêre fortes,
Patrium propter periêre littus
Bis quatèr centum; subitò sub alto,
Æquore mersi.

Navis, innitens lateri, jacebat,
Malus ad summas trepidabat undas,
Cum levis, funes quatiens, ad imum
Depulit aura.

Plangimus fortes. Nimis, heu, caducam
Fortibus vitem voluêre parcæ,
Nec sinunt ultra tibi nos recentes
Nectere laurus.

Magne, qui nomen, licet incanorum
Traditum ex multis atavis tulisti!
At tuos olim memorabit ævum
Omne triumphos.

Non hyems illos furibunda mersit,
Non mari in clauso scopuli latentes,
Fissa non rimis abies, nec atrox
Abstulit ensis.

Navitæ sed tum nimium jocosi
Voce fallebant hilari laborem
Et quiescebat, calamoque dextram
Impleverat heros.

Vos, quibus cordi est grave opus piumque,
Humidum ex alto spolium levate,
Et putrescentes sub aquis amicos
Reddite amicis!

Hi quidem (sic dîs placuit) fuêre:
Sed ratis, nondum putris, ire possit
Rursus in bellum, Britonumque nomen
Tollere ad astra.

ODE TO PEACE.

Come, peace of mind, delightful guest!
Return and make thy downy nest
Once more in this sad heart:
Nor riches I, nor power pursue,
Nor hold forbidden joys in view;
We therefore need not part.

Where wilt thou dwell, if not with me,
From Avarice and Ambition free,
And Pleasure's fatal wiles?
For whom, alas! dost thou prepare
The sweets that I was wont to share,
The banquet of thy smiles?

The great, the gay, shall they partake
The Heaven that thou alone canst make?
And wilt thou quit the stream
That murmurs through the dewy mead,
The grove, and the sequestered shed,
To be a guest with them?

For thee I panted, thee I prized,
For thee I gladly sacrificed
Whate'er I loved before,
And shall I see thee start away,
And helpless, hopeless, hear thee say,
"Farewell! we meet no more"?

SONG.—ON PEACE.

AIR—"*My fond Shepherds of late.*"

No longer I follow a sound;
  No longer a dream I pursue;
O happiness! not to be found,
  Unattainable treasure, adieu!

I have sought thee in splendour and dress,
  In the regions of pleasure and taste;
I have sought thee, and seem'd to possess,
  But have proved thee a vision at last.

An humble ambition and hope
  The voice of true wisdom inspires;
'Tis sufficient, if peace be the scope,
  And the summit of all our desires.

Peace may be the lot of the mind
  That seeks it in meekness and love;
But rapture and bliss are confined
  To the glorified spirits above.

SONG.

AIR—"*The Lass of Pattie's Mill.*"

WHEN all within is peace,
  How nature seems to smile;
Delights that never cease
  The livelong day beguile.
From morn to dewy eve,
  With open hand she showers
Fresh blessings, to deceive
  And soothe the silent hours.

It is content of heart
  Gives Nature power to please;
The mind that feels no smart
  Enlivens all it sees,
Can make a wintry sky
  Seem bright as smiling May,
And evening's closing eye
  As peep of early day.

The vast majestic globe,
  So beauteously array'd
In Nature's various robe,
  With wondrous skill display'd,
Is to a mourner's heart
  A dreary wild at best;
It flutters to depart,
  And longs to be at rest.

THE DISTRESSED TRAVELLERS;

OR, LABOUR IN VAIN.

A NEW SONG TO A TUNE NEVER SUNG BEFORE.

1.

I SING of a journey to Clifton,*
  We would have perform'd if we could,

* Clifton Reynes, of which church Lady Austen's brother-in-law was incumbent.

Without cart or barrow to lift on
Poor Mary* and me through the mud.
Slee sla slud,
Stuck in the mud.
Oh it is pretty to wade through a flood!

2.

So away we went, slipping and sliding,
Hop, hop, *à la mode de deux* frogs,
'Tis near as good walking as riding,
When ladies are dress'd in their clogs.
Wheels, no doubt,
Go briskly about,
But they clatter and rattle, and make such a rout!

3.

SHE.

"Well! now I protest it is charming;
How finely the weather improves!
That cloud, though 'tis rather alarming,
How slowly and stately it moves!"

HE.

"Pshaw! never mind,
'Tis not in the wind,
We are travelling south, and shall leave it behind."

4.

SHE.

"I am glad we are come for an airing,
For folks may be pounded and penn'd,
Until they grow rusty, not caring
To stir half-a-mile to an end."

HE.

"The longer we stay,
The longer we may;
It's a folly to think about weather or way."

5.

SHE.

"But now I begin to be frighted;
If I fall, what a way I should roll!
I am glad that the bridge was indicted,—
Stay! stop! I am sunk in a hole!"

* Mrs. Unwin.

HE.

"Nay, never care!
'Tis a common affair;
You'll not be the last that will set a foot there."

6.

SHE.

"Let me breathe now a little, and ponder
On what it were better to do;
That terrible lane I see yonder,
I think we shall never get through."

HE.

"So think I:—
But, by the by,
We never shall know, if we never should try."

7.

SHE.

"But should we get there, how shall we get home?
What a terrible deal of bad road we have past!
Slipping and sliding; and if we should come
To a difficult stile, I am ruin'd at last!
O this lane:
Now it is plain
That struggling and striving is labour in vain."

8.

HE.

"Stick fast there while I go and look—"

SHE.

"Don't go away, for fear I should fall!"

HE.

"I have examined it every nook,
And what you see here is a sample of all,
Come, wheel round,
The dirt we have found
Would be an estate at a farthing a pound."

9.

Now, sister Anne,* the guitar you must take,
Set it, and sing it, and make it a song;

* Lady Austen.

I have varied the verse for variety's sake,
And cut it off short—because it was long.
'Tis hobbling and lame,
Which critics wont blame,
For the sense and the sound, they say, should be the same.

THE ROSE.

1783.

The rose had been wash'd, just wash'd in a shower,
Which Mary to Anna conveyed;*
The plentiful moisture encumber'd the flower,
And weigh'd down its beautiful head.

The cup was all fill'd, and the leaves were all wet,
And it seem'd, to a fanciful view,
To weep for the buds it had left with regret
On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was
For a nosegay, so dripping and drown'd,
And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas!
I snapp'd it, it fell to the ground.

"And such," I exclaim'd, "is the pitiless part
Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to sorrow resign'd.

"This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
Might have bloom'd with its owner awhile;
And the tear that is wiped with a little address,
May be follow'd perhaps by a smile."

THE VALEDICTION.†

Farewell, false hearts; whose best affections fail
Like shallow brooks which summer suns exhale!
Forgetful of the man whom once ye chose,
Cold in his cause, and careless of his woes;
I bid you both a long and last adieu!
Cold in my turn, and unconcern'd like you.

* "Mary" was Mrs. Unwin; "Anna," Lady Austen.

† These lines were written in a fit of indignation; because neither Lord Thurlow nor Colman had acknowledged the receipt of his first volume of poems.

First farewell Niger!* whom, now duly proved,
I disregard as much as I have loved.
Your brain well furnish'd, and your tongue well taught
To press with energy your ardent thought,
Your senatorial dignity of face,
Sound sense, intrepid spirit, manly grace,
Have raised you high as talents can ascend,
Made you a peer, but spoilt you for a friend!
Pretend to all that parts have e'er acquired;
Be great, be fear'd, be envied, be admired;
To fame as lasting as the earth pretend,
But not hereafter to the name of friend!
I sent you verse, and, as your lordship knows,
Back'd with a modest sheet of humble prose;
Not to recall a promise to your mind,
Fulfill'd with ease had you been so inclined,
But to comply with feelings, and to give
Proof of an old affection still alive.
Your sullen silence serves at least to tell
Your alter'd heart: and so, my lord, farewell!
Next, busy actor on a meaner stage,†
Amusement-monger of a trifling age,
Illustrious histrionic patentee,
Terentius,‡ once my friend, farewell to thee!
In thee some virtuous qualities combine,
To fit thee for a nobler part than thine,
Who, born a gentleman, hast stoop'd too low,
To live by buskin, sock, and raree-show.
Thy schoolfellow, and partner of thy plays,
When Nichols§ swung the birch and twined the bays,
And having known thee bearded and full grown,
The weekly censor of a laughing town,||
I thought the volume I presumed to send,
Graced with the name of a long-absent friend,
Might prove a welcome gift, and touch thine heart,
Not hard by nature, in a feeling part.
But thou, it seems (what cannot grandeur do,
Though but a dream!) art grown disdainful too;
And strutting in thy school of queens and kings,
Who fret their hour and are forgotten things,
Hast caught the cold distemper of the day,
And, like his lordship, cast thy friend away.
O Friendship! cordial of the human breast!
So little felt, so fervently profess'd!

---

* "Black" Lord Thurlow. † Colman, proprietor of the Haymarket Theatre.
‡ Alluding to Colman's translation of *Terence*.
§ The master of Westminster school when Cowper was there.
|| In the *Connoisseur*.

Thy blossoms deck our unsuspecting years;
The promise of delicious fruit appears:
We hug the hopes of constancy and truth,
Such is the folly of our dreaming youth;
But soon, alas! detect the rash mistake
That sanguine inexperience loves to make;
And view with tears the expected harvest lost,
Decay'd by time, or wither'd by a frost.
Whoever undertakes a friend's great part
Should be renew'd in nature, pure in heart,
Prepared for martyrdom, and strong to prove
A thousand ways the force of genuine love.
He may be call'd to give up health and gain,
To exchange content for trouble, ease for pain,
To echo sigh for sigh, and groan for groan,
And wet his cheeks with sorrows not his own.
The heart of man, for such a task too frail,
When most relied on is most sure to fail;
And, summon'd to partake its fellow's woe,
Starts from its office, like a broken bow.
　Votaries of business, and of pleasure, prove
Faithless alike in friendship and in love.
Retired from all the circles of the gay,
And all the crowds that bustle life away,
To scenes where competition, envy, strife,
Beget no thunder-clouds to trouble life,
Let me, the charge of some good angel, find
One who has known and has escaped mankind;
Polite, yet virtuous, who has brought away
The manners, not the morals, of the day:
With him, perhaps with *her* (for men have known
No firmer friendships than the fair have shown),
Let me enjoy, in some unthought-of spot,
All former friends forgiven and forgot,
Down to the close of life's fast fading scene,
Union of hearts, without a flaw between.
'Tis grace, 'tis bounty, and it calls for praise,
If God give health, that sunshine of our days!
And if He add, a blessing shared by few,
Content of heart, more praises still are due!
But if He grant a friend, that boon possess'd
Indeed is treasure, and crowns all the rest;
And giving one, whose heart is in the skies,
Born from above, and made divinely wise,
He gives, what bankrupt Nature never can,
Whose noblest coin is light and brittle man,
Gold, purer far than Ophir ever knew,
A soul, an image of Himself, and therefore true.

TO THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF THE HALIBUT,

ON WHICH I DINED THIS DAY, MONDAY, APRIL 26, 1784.

WHERE hast thou floated, in what seas pursued
Thy pastime? When wast thou an egg new spawn'd,
Lost in the immensity of ocean's waste?
Roar as they might, the overbearing winds
That rock'd the deep, thy cradle, thou wast safe—
And in thy minikin and embryo state,
Attach'd to the firm leaf of some salt weed,
Didst outlive tempests, such as wrung and rack'd
The joints of many a stout and gallant bark,
And whelm'd them in the unexplored abyss.
Indebted to no magnet and no chart,
Nor under guidance of the polar fire,
Thou wast a voyager on many coasts,
Grazing at large in meadows submarine,
Where flat Batavia, just emerging, peeps
Above the brine,—where Caledonia's rocks
Beat back the surge,—and where Hibernia shoots
Her wondrous causeway far into the main.
Wherever thou hast fed, thou little thought'st,
And I not more, that I should feed on thee.
Peace, therefore, and good health, and much good fish,
To him who sent thee! and success, as oft
As it descends into the billowy gulf,
To the same drag that caught thee!—Fare thee well!
Thy lot thy brethren of the slimy fin
Would envy, could they know that thou wast doom'd
To feed a bard, and to be praised in verse.

PAIRING-TIME ANTICIPATED.

A FABLE.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau*
If birds confabulate or no;
'Tis clear that they were always able
To hold discourse, at least in fable;
And even the child who knows no better
Than to interpret by the letter,
A story of a cock and bull,
Must have a most uncommon skull.

* It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals, should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses?—(C.)

It chanced then on a winter's day,
But warm and bright and calm as May,
The birds, conceiving a design
To forestall sweet St. Valentine,
In many an orchard, copse, and grove
Assembled on affairs of love,
And with much twitter and much chatter
Began to agitate the matter.
At length a Bullfinch, who could boast
More years and wisdom than the most,
Entreated, opening wide his beak,
A moment's liberty to speak;
And silence publicly enjoin'd,
Deliver'd briefly thus his mind:
"My friends! be cautious how ye treat
The subject upon which we meet;
I fear we shall have winter yet."
A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
With golden wing and satin poll,
A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied:
"Methinks the gentleman," quoth she,
"Opposite in the apple-tree,
By his good will would keep us single
Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle;
Or (which is likelier to befall)
Till death exterminate us all.
I marry without more ado;
My dear Dick Redcap, what say you?"
Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
Turning short round, strutting, and sideling,
Attested, glad, his approbation
Of an immediate conjugation.
Their sentiments so well express'd
Influenced mightily the rest;
All pair'd, and each pair built a nest.
But though the birds were thus in haste,
The leaves came on not quite so fast,
And destiny, that sometimes bears
An aspect stern on man's affairs,
Not altogether smiled on theirs.
The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
Now shifted east, and east by north;
Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
Could shelter them from rain or snow:
Stepping into their nests they paddled,
Themselves were chill'd, their eggs were addled;
Soon every father bird and mother
Grew quarrelsome, and peck'd each other,
Parted without the least regret,
Except that they had ever met,
And learned in future to be wiser
Than to neglect a good adviser.

MORAL.

Misses! the tale that I relate
This lesson seems to carry—
Choose not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.

HUMAN FRAILTY.

Weak and irresolute is man;
The purpose of to-day,
Woven with pains into his plan,
To-morrow rends away.

The bow well bent and smart the spring,
Vice seems already slain;
But passion rudely snaps the string,
And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent
  Finds out his weaker part,
Virtue engages his assent,
  But pleasure wins his heart.

'Tis here the folly of the wise
  Through all his art we view,
And while his tongue the charge denies
  His conscience owns it true.

Bound on a voyage of awful length,
  And dangers little known,
A stranger to superior strength,
  Man vainly trusts his own.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail
  To reach the distant coast,
The breath of heaven must swell the sail
  Or all the toil is lost.

VERSES

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK, DURING HIS SOLITARY ABODE ON THE ISLAND OF JUAN FERNANDEZ.

1782.

I AM monarch of all I survey,
  My right there is none to dispute,
From the centre all round to the sea,
  I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O solitude! where are the charms
  That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
  Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
  I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech,
  I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain,
  My form with indifference see,
They are so unacquainted with man,
  Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,
  Divinely bestow'd upon man,
Oh, had I the wings of a dove,
  How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
  In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
  And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
  Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
  Or all that this earth can afford.

But the sound of the church-going bell
 These valleys and rocks never heard,
Ne'er sigh'd at the sound of a knell,
 Or smiled when a Sabbath appear'd.

Ye winds that have made me your sport,
 Convey to this desolate shore,
Some cordial endearing report
 Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
 A wish or a thought after me?
Oh tell me I yet have a friend,
 Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is the glance of the mind!
 Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
 And the swift-wingèd arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,
 In a moment I seem to be there;
But alas! recollection at hand
 Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
 The beast is laid down in his lair,
Even here is a season of rest,
 And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
 And mercy, encouraging thought!
Gives even affliction a grace,
 And reconciles man to his lot.

AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL.*

DEAR Joseph—five-and-twenty years ago—
Alas, how time escapes!—'tis even so—
With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour—and now we never meet!
As some grave gentleman in Terence says,
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days,)
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—
Strange fluctuation of all human things!
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,
But distance only cannot change the heart:

---

* An early friend of Cowper's, who introduced him to Thurlow. He was made the Chancellor's Secretary.

And, were I call'd to prove the assertion true,
One proof should serve—a reference to you.
  Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occurr'd to kindle strife,
We find the friends we fancied we had won,
Though numerous once, reduced to few or none?
Can gold grow worthless that has stood the touch?
No; gold they seem'd, but they were never such.
  Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,
Swinging the parlour door upon its hinge,
Dreading a negative, and overawed
Lest he should trespass, begg'd to go abroad.
"Go, fellow!—whither?"—turning short about—
"Nay—stay at home—you're always going out."
"'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end."—
"For what?"—"An' please you, sir, to see a friend."
'A friend!" Horatio cried, and seem'd to start—
'Yea, marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.
And fetch my cloak; for though the night be raw,
I'll see him too—the first I ever saw."
  I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
And was his plaything often when a child;
But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,
Else he was seldom bitter or morose:
Perhaps, his confidence just then betray'd,
His grief might prompt him with the speech he made;
Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.
Howe'er it was, his language in my mind,
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.
  But not to moralise too much, and strain
To prove an evil of which all complain,
(I hate long arguments verbosely spun;)
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done:
Once on a time an emperor, a wise man,
No matter where, in China or Japan,
Decreed that whosoever should offend
Against the well-known duties of a friend,
Convicted once, should ever after wear
But half a coat, and shew his bosom bare.
The punishment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out.
  Oh happy Britain! we have not to fear
Such hard and arbitrary measure here;
Else, could a law like that which I relate,
Once have the sanction of our triple state,
Some few, that I have known in days of old,
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold;

While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow
Might traverse England safely to and fro,
An honest man, close-button'd to the chin,
Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within.

THE MORALISER CORRECTED.*

A TALE.

A HERMIT, (or if 'chance you hold
That title now too trite and old,)
A man once young, who lived retired
As hermit could have well desired,
His hours of study closed at last,
And finish'd his concise repast,
Stoppled his cruise, replaced his book
Within its customary nook,
And, staff in hand, set forth to share
The sober cordial of sweet air,
Like Isaac, with a mind applied
To serious thought at evening-tide.
Autumnal rains had made it chill,
And from the trees, that fringed his hill
Shades slanting at the close of day
Chill'd more his else delightful way,
Distant a little mile he spied
A western bank's still sunny side,
And right toward the favour'd place
Proceeding with his nimblest pace,
In hope to bask a little yet,
Just reach'd it when the sun was set.
Your hermit, young and jovial sirs!
Learns something from whate'er occurs;—
And hence, he said, my mind computes
The real worth of man's pursuits.
His object chosen, wealth or fame,
Or other sublunary game,
Imagination to his view
Presents it deck'd with every hue,
That can seduce him not to spare
His powers of best exertion there,
But youth, health, vigour to expend
On so desirable an end.
Ere long approach life's evening shades,
The glow that fancy gave it fades;
And, earn'd too late, it wants the grace
That first engaged him in the chase.
True, answer'd an angelic guide,
Attendant at the senior's side,—
But whether all the time it cost,
To urge the fruitless chase be lost,
Must be decided by the worth
Of that which call'd his ardour forth.
Trifles pursued, whate'er the event,
Must cause him shame or discontent;
A vicious object still is worse,
Successful there he wins a curse;
But he, whom even in life's last stage
Endeavours laudable engage,
Is paid at least in peace of mind,
And sense of having well design'd;
And if, ere he attain his end,
His sun precipitate descend,
A brighter prize than that he meant
Shall recompense his mere intent.
No virtuous wish can bear a date
Either too early or too late.

ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INK-GLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

PATRON of all those luckless brains
That, to the wrong side leaning,
Indite much metre with much pains,
And little or no meaning;

Ah, why since oceans, rivers, streams
That water all the nations,
Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,
In constant exhalations;

Why, stooping from the noon of day,
Too covetous of drink,
Apollo, hast thou stolen away
A poet's drop of ink?

Upborne into the viewless air,
It floats a vapour now,
Impelled through regions dense and rare,
By all the winds that blow;

Ordain'd perhaps ere summer flies,
Combin'd with millions more,
To form an iris in the skies,
Though black and foul before.

Illustrious drop! and happy then
Beyond the happiest lot,
Of all that ever pass'd my pen,
So soon to be forgot!

Phœbus, if such be thy design
To place it in thy bow,
Give wit, that what is left may shine
With equal grace below.

THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

THE greenhouse is my summer seat;
My shrubs displaced from that retreat
Enjoy'd the open air;
Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song
Had been their mutual solace long,
Lived happy prisoners there.

They sang as blithe as finches sing
That flutter loose on golden wing,
And frolic where they list;
Strangers to liberty, 'tis true,
But that delight they never knew,
And therefore never miss'd.

But nature works in every breast,
With force not easily suppress'd;
And Dick felt some desires,
That, after many an effort vain,
Instructed him at length to gain
A pass between his wires.

The open windows seem'd to invite
The freeman to a farewell flight;
But Tom was still confined;
And Dick, although his way was clear,
Was much too generous and sincere
To leave his friend behind.

So settling on his cage, by play,
And chirp, and kiss, he seem'd to say,
You must not live alone;—
Nor would he quit that chosen stand
Till I, with slow and cautious hand,
Return'd him to his own.

Oh ye, who never taste the joys
Of friendship, satisfied with noise,
Fandango, ball, and rout!
Blush when I tell you how a bird
A prison with a friend preferr'd
To liberty without.

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION TO WILLIAM NORTHCOT.

Hic sepultus est
Inter suorum lacrymas
GULIELMUS NORTHCOT,
GULIELMI et MARIÆ filius
Unicus, unicé dilectus,
Qui floris ritu succisus est
semihiantis,
Aprilis die septimo,
1780. Æt. 10.

Care, vale! Sed non æternum, care, valeto!
Namque iterum tecum, sim modò dignus, ero.
Tum nihil amplexus poterit divellere nostros,
Nec tu marcesces, nec lacrymabor ego.

TRANSLATION.

Farewell! "But not for ever," Hope replies,
Trace but his steps and meet him in the skies!
There nothing shall renew our parting pain,
Thou shalt not wither, nor I weep again.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE,

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED STATE.

The lady thus address'd her spouse—
"What a mere dungeon is this house!
By no means large enough; and was it,
Yet this dull room, and that dark closet,
Those hangings with their worn-out graces,
Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,
Are such an antiquated scene,
They overwhelm me with the spleen."
Sir Humphrey, shooting in the dark,
Makes answer quite beside the mark:
"No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,
Engaged myself to be at home,
And shall expect him at the door
Precisely when the clock strikes four."
"You are so deaf," the lady cried,
(And raised her voice, and frown'd beside,)
"You are so sadly deaf, my dear,
What shall I do to make you hear?"
"Dismiss poor Harry!" he replies;
"Some people are more nice than wise:
For one slight trespass all this stir?
What if he did ride whip and spur,
'Twas but a mile—your favourite horse
Will never look one hair the worse."
"Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing—"
"Child! I am rather hard of hearing."
"Yes, truly—one must scream and bawl:
I tell you, you can't hear at all!"
Then, with a voice exceeding low,
"No matter if you hear or no."
Alas! and is domestic strife,
That sorest ill of human life,
A plague so little to be fear'd,
As to be wantonly incurr'd,
To gratify a fretful passion,
On every trivial provocation?
The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear;
And something every day they live
To pity and perhaps forgive.
But if infirmities, that fall
In common to the lot of all,

A blemish or a sense impair'd,
Are crimes so little to be spared,
Then farewell all that must create
The comfort of the wedded state;
Instead of harmony, 'tis jar,
And tumult, and intestine war.
The love that cheers life's latest stage,
Proof against sickness and old age,
Preserved by virtue from declension,
Becomes not weary of attention;
But lives, when that exterior grace,
Which first inspired the flame, decays.
'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,
To faults compassionate or blind,
And will with sympathy endure
Those evils it would gladly cure;
But angry, coarse, and harsh expression
Shows love to be a mere profession;
Proves that the heart is none of his,
Or soon expels him if it is.

BOADICEA.

AN ODE.

When the British warrior Queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsels of her country's gods,

Sage beneath the spreading oak,
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;
Every burning word he spoke
Full of rage, and full of grief.

"Princess! if our aged eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
'Tis because resentment ties
All the terrors of our tongues.

"Rome shall perish—write that word
In the blood that she has spilt;
Perish, hopeless and abhorr'd,
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

"Rome, for empire far renown'd,
Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates!

"Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame.

"Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Arm'd with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

"Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway;
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they."

Such the bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
Felt them in her bosom glow:
Rush'd to battle, fought, and died;
Dying, hurl'd them at the foe.

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestow'd,
Shame and ruin wait for you.

TO THE REV. W. CAWTHORNE UNWIN.

Unwin, I should but ill repay
The kindness of a friend,
Whose worth deserves as warm a lay,
As ever friendship penn'd,
Thy name omitted in a page,
That would reclaim a vicious age.

A union form'd as mine with thee,
  Not rashly, or in sport,
May be as fervent in degree
  And faithful in its sort,
And may as rich in comfort prove,
As that of true fraternal love.

The bud inserted in the rind,
  The bud of peach or rose,
Adorns, though differing in its kind,
  The stock whereon it grows,
With flower as sweet, or fruit as fair,
As if produced by nature there.

Not rich, I render what I may,
  I seize thy name in haste,
And place it in this first essay,
  Lest this should prove the last.
'Tis where it should be—in a plan,
That holds in view the good of man.

The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,
  Should be the poet's heart;
Affection lights a brighter flame
  Than ever blazed by art.
No muses on these lines attend,
I sink the poet in the friend.

TO THE REVEREND MR. NEWTON.

AN INVITATION INTO THE COUNTRY.

The swallows in their torpid state
  Compose their useless wing,
And bees in hives as idly wait
  The call of early Spring.

The keenest frost that binds the stream,
  The wildest wind that blows,
Are neither felt nor fear'd by them,
  Secure of their repose.

But man all feeling and awake,
  The gloomy scene surveys,
With present ills his heart must ache,
  And pant for brighter days.

Old Winter, halting o'er the mead,
  Bids me and Mary mourn;
But lovely Spring peeps o'er his head,
  And whispers your return.

Then April with her sister May
  Shall chase him from the bowers,
And weave fresh garlands every day,
  To crown the smiling hours.

And if a tear that speaks regret
  Of happier times appear,
A glimpse of joy that we have met
  Shall shine, and dry the tear.

THE LILY AND THE ROSE.

The nymph must lose her female friend
  If more admired than she—
But where will fierce contention end,
  If flowers can disagree?

Within the garden's peaceful scene,
  Appear'd two lovely foes,
Aspiring to the rank of queen,
  The Lily and the Rose.

The Rose soon redden'd into rage,
  And swelling with disdain,
Appeal'd to many a poet's page
  To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height bespoke command,
  A fair imperial flower,
She seem'd design'd for Flora's hand,
  The sceptre of her power.

This civil bickering and debate
  The goddess chanced to hear,
And flew to save, ere yet too late,
  The pride of the parterre.

"Yours is," she said, "the nobler hue,
  And yours the statelier mien,
And, till a third surpasses you,
  Let each be deem'd a queen."

Thus soothed and reconciled, each seeks
  The fairest British fair,
The seat of empire is her cheeks,
  They reign united there.

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

Heu inimicitias quoties parit æmula forma,
  Quam raro pulchræ pulchra placere potest!
Sed fines ultrà solitos discordia tendit,
  Cum flores ipsos bilis et ira movent.

Hortus ubi dulces præbet tacitosque recessûs,
  Se rapit in partes gens animosa duas,
Hic sibi regales Amaryllis candida cultûs,
  Illic purpureo vindicat ore Rosa.

Ira Rosam et meritis quæsita superbia tangunt,
  Multaque ferventi vix cohibenda sinû,
Dum sibi fautorum ciet undique nomina vatûm,
  Jusque suum, multo carmine fulta, probat.

Altior emicat illa, et celso vertice nutat,
  Ceu flores inter non habitura parem,
Fastiditque alios, et nata videtur in usûs
  Imperii, sceptrum, Flora quod ipsa gerat.

Nec Dea non sensit civilis murmura rixæ,
  Cui curæ est pictas pandere ruris opes.
Deliciasque suas nunquam non prompta tueri,
  Dum licet et locus est, ut tueatur, adest.

"Et tibi forma datur procerior omnibus," inquit,
  "Et tibi, principibus qui solet esse, color,
Et donec vincat quædam formosior ambas,
  Et tibi reginæ nomen, et esto tibi."

His ubi sedatus furor est, petit utraque nympham
  Qualem inter Veneres Anglia sola parit;
Hanc penes imperium est, nihil optant amplius, hujus
  Regnant in nitidis, et sine lite, genis.

THE WINTER NOSEGAY.

WHAT Nature, alas! has denied
To the delicate growth of our isle,
Art has in a measure supplied,
And winter is deck'd with a smile.
See, Mary, what beauties I bring
From the shelter of that sunny shed,
Where the flowers have the charms of the spring,
Though abroad they are frozen and dead.

'Tis a bower of Arcadian sweets,
Where Flora is still in her prime;
A fortress to which she retreats,
From the cruel assaults of the clime.
While earth wears a mantle of snow,
These pinks are as fresh and as gay
As the fairest and sweetest that blow
On the beautiful bosom of May.

See how they have safely survived
The frowns of a sky so severe!
Such Mary's true love that has lived
Through many a turbulent year.
The charms of the late-blowing rose,
Seem'd graced with a livelier hue,
And the winter of sorrow best shows
The truth of a friend such as you.

THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE PLANT.

AN Oyster cast upon the shore
Was heard, though never heard before,
Complaining in a speech well worded,
And worthy thus to be recorded:—
"Ah, hapless wretch! condemn'd to dwell
For ever in my native shell,
Ordain'd to move when others please,
Not for my own content or ease,
But toss'd and buffeted about,
Now in the water, and now out.
'Twere better to be born a stone
Of ruder shape and feeling none,
Than with a tenderness like mine,
And sensibilities so fine!
I envy that unfeeling shrub,
Fast rooted against every rub."
The plant he meant grew not far off,
And felt the sneer with scorn enough,
Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,
And with asperity replied.
"When," cry the botanists, and stare,
"Did plants call'd Sensitive grow there?"
No matter when—a poet's muse is
To make them grow just where she chooses.
"You shapeless nothing in a dish,
You that are but almost a fish,
I scorn your coarse insinuation,
And have most plentiful occasion
To wish myself the rock I view,
Or such another dolt as you.
For many a grave and learned clerk,
And many a gay unletter'd spark,
With curious touch examines me,
If I can feel as well as he;
And when I bend, retire, and shrink,
Says, "Well—'tis more than one would think."
Thus life is spent! oh fie upon't,
In being touch'd, and crying—"Don't!"
A poet, in his evening walk,
O'erheard and check'd this idle talk.
"And your fine sense," he said, "and yours,
Whatever evil it endures,
Deserves not, if so soon offended,
Much to be pitied or commended.

Disputes, though short, are far too long,
Where both alike are in the wrong;
Your feelings in their full amount,
Are all upon your own account.
"You, in your grotto-work enclosed
Complain of being thus exposed,
Yet nothing feel in that rough coat,
Save when the knife is at your throat.
Wherever driven by wind or tide,
Exempt from every ill beside.
"And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,
Who reckon every touch a blemish,
If all the plants that can be found
Embellishing the scene around,
Should droop and wither where they grow,
You would not feel at all, not you.
The noblest minds their virtue prove
By pity, sympathy, and love:
These, these are feelings truly fine,
And prove their owner half divine."
His censure reach'd them as he dealt it,
And each by shrinking shew'd he felt it.

EPITAPH ON DR. JOHNSON.

Here Johnson lies, a sage by all allow'd,
Whom to have bred, may well make England proud;
Whose prose was eloquence, by Wisdom taught,
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;
Whose verse may claim, grave, masculine, and strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song;
Who many a noble gift from heaven possess'd,
And faith at last, alone worth all the rest.
O man, immortal by a double prize,
By fame on earth, by glory in the skies!

ON THE AUTHOR* OF LETTERS ON LITERATURE.

1785.

The Genius of the Augustan age
His head among Rome's ruins, rear'd,
And bursting with heroic rage,
When literary Heron appear'd,

"Thou hast," he cried, "like him of old,
Who set the Ephesian dome on fire,
By being scandalously bold,
Attain'd the mark of thy desire.

"And for traducing Virgil's name
Shalt share his merited reward;
A perpetuity of fame,
That rots, and stinks, and is abhorr'd."

* John Pinkerton, Heron was his *nom de plume.* Cowper was very indignant at the publication of these letters.

THE SHRUBBERY

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION.

Oh happy shades! to me unblest,
Friendly to peace, but not to me,
How ill the scene that offers rest,
And heart that cannot rest, agree!

This glassy stream, that spreading pine,
Those alders quivering to the breeze,
Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine,
And please, if anything could please.

But fix'd, unalterable Care,
Foregoes not what she feels within,
Shews the same sadness every where,
And slights the season and the scene.

For all that pleased in wood or lawn,
While Peace possess'd these silent bowers,
Her animating smile withdrawn,
Has lost its beauties and its powers.

The saint or moralist should tread
This moss-grown alley, musing slow;
They seek like me the secret shade,
But not like me, to nourish woe.

Me fruitful scenes and prospects waste,
Alike admonish not to roam;
These tell me of enjoyments past,
And those of sorrows yet to come.

THE POPLAR FIELD.

The poplars are fell'd; farewell to the shade,
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade!
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view
Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew;
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade!

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,
And the scene where his melody charm'd me before
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,
Have a being less durable even than he.

TO MISS CREUZÉ, ON HER BIRTHDAY.

How many between east and west
Disgrace their parent earth,
Whose deeds constrain us to detest
The day that gave them birth!

Not so when Stella's natal morn
Revolving months restore,
We can rejoice that she was born,
And wish her born once more!

GRATITUDE.

ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH.

This cap that so stately appears,
With ribbon-bound tassel on high,
Which seems by the crest that it rears
Ambitious of brushing the sky:
This cap to my cousin I owe,
She gave it, and gave me beside,
Wreathed into an elegant bow,
The ribbon with which it is tied.

This wheel-footed studying chair,
Contrived both for toil and repose
Wide-elbow'd, and wadded with hair,
In which I both scribble and dose,
Bright-studded to dazzle the eyes,
And rival in lustre of that
In which, or astronomy lies,
Fair Cassiopeïa sat!

These carpets, so soft to the foot,
Caledonia's traffic and pride,
Oh spare them, ye knights of the boot,
Escaped from the cross-country ride!
This table and mirror within,
Secure from collision and dust,
At which I oft shave cheek and chin,
And periwig nicely adjust:

This moveable structure of shelves,
For its beauty admired and its use,
And charged with octavos and twelves,
The gayest I had to produce;
Where, flaming in scarlet and gold,
My poems enchanted I view,
And hope, in due time, to behold
My Iliad and Odyssey too:

This china, that decks the alcove,
Which here people call a buf*fet*,
But what the gods call it above,
Has ne'er been revealed to us yet:
These curtains that keep the room warm
Or cool, as the season demands,
Those stoves that for pattern and form
Seem the labour of Mulciber's hands:

All these are not half that I owe
To One, from our earliest youth
To me ever ready to shew
Benignity, friendship, and truth;
For time, the destroyer declared
And foe of our perishing kind,
If even her face he has spared,
Much less could he alter her mind.

Thus compass'd about with the goods
And chattels of leisure and ease,
I indulge my poetical moods
In many such fancies as these;
And fancies I fear they will seem—
Poet's goods are not often so fine;
The poets will swear that I dream,
When I sing of the splendour of mine.

STANZAS

SUBJOINED TO THE YEARLY BILL OF MORTALITY OF THE PARISH OF ALL-SAINTS, NORTHAMPTON, ANNO DOMINI 1787.*

**Pallida Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas,
Regumque turres.** HORACE.
**Pale Death with equal foot strikes wide the door
Of royal halls and hovels of the poor.**

WHILE thirteen moons saw smoothly run
The Nen's barge-laden wave,
All these, life's rambling journey done,
Have found their home, the grave.

Was man (frail always) made more frail
Than in foregoing years?
Did famine or did plague prevail,
That so much death appears?

No; these were vigorous as their sires,
Nor plague nor famine came;
This annual tribute Death requires,
And never waives his claim.

Like crowded forest-trees we stand,
And some are mark'd to fall;
The axe will smite at God's command,
And soon shall smite us all.

Green as the bay tree, ever green,
With its new foliage on,
The gay, the thoughtless, have I seen,
I pass'd,—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the awful truth
With which I charge my page!
A worm is in the bud of youth,
And at the root of age.

No present health can health insure
For yet an hour to come;
No medicine, though it oft can cure,
Can always balk the tomb.

And oh! that humble as my lot,
And scorn'd as is my strain,
These truths, though known, too much forgot,
I may not teach in vain.

So prays your Clerk with all his heart,
And ere he quits the pen,
Begs *you* for once to take *his* part,
And answer all—Amen!

* In the following extract, from a letter of the poet's to Lady Hesketh, Cowper explains how he came to write on such a subject. "On Monday morning last, Sam brought me word that there was a man in the kitchen who desired to speak with me. I ordered him in. A plain, decent, elderly figure made its appearance, and, being desired to sit, spoke as follows: 'Sir, I am clerk of the parish of All Saints, in Northampton; brother of Mr. C. [Cox,] the upholsterer. It is customary for the person in my office to annex to a bill of mortality, which he publishes at Christmas, a copy of verses. You will do me a great favour, sir, if you will furnish me with one.' To this I replied, 'Mr. C., you have several men of genius in your town, why have you not applied to some of them? There is a namesake of yours in particular, C——, the statuary, who, everybody knows, is a first-rate maker of verses. He surely is the man of all the world for your purpose.' 'Alas! sir, I have heretofore borrowed help of him, but he is a gentleman of so much reading that the people of our town cannot understand him.' I confess to you, my dear, I felt all the force of the compliment implied in this speech, and was almost ready to answer, 'Perhaps, my good friend, they may find me unintelligible too for the same reason.' But, on asking him whether he had walked over to Weston on purpose to implore the assistance of my muse, and on his replying in the affirmative, I felt my mortified vanity a little consoled, and, pitying the poor man's distress, which appeared to be considerable, promised to supply him. The waggon has accordingly gone this day to Northampton loaded in part with my effusions in the mortuary style. A fig for poets who write epitaphs on individuals! I have written *one* that serves *two hundred* persons."

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1788.

**Quod adest, memento
Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis
Rit, feruntur. HORACE.**

**Improve the present hour, for all beside
Is a mere feather on a torrent's tide.**

COULD I, from Heaven inspired, as sure presage
To whom the rising year shall prove his last,
As I can number in my punctual page,
And item down the victims of the past;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet
On which the press might stamp him next to die;
And, reading here his sentence, how replete
With anxious meaning, heavenward turn his eye!

Time then would seem more precious than the joys
In which he sports away the treasure now;
And prayer more seasonable than the noise
Of drunkards, or the music-drawing bow.

Then doubtless many a trifler, on the brink
Of this world's hazardous and headlong shore,
Forced to a pause, would feel it good to think,
Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

Ah self-deceived! Could I prophetic say
Who next is fated, and who next to fall,
The rest might then seem privileged to play;
But, naming none, the Voice now speaks to all.

Observe the dappled foresters, how light
They bound and airy o'er the sunny glade:
One falls—the rest, wide scatter'd with affright,
Vanish at once into the darkest shade.

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warn'd,
Still need repeated warnings, and at last,
A thousand awful admonitions scorn'd,
Die self-accused of life run all to waste?

Sad waste! for which no after-thrift atones!
The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin;
Dewdrops may deck the turf that hides the bones,
But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

Learn then, ye living! by the mouths be taught
Of all those sepulchres, instructors true,
That, soon or late, death also is your lot;
And the next opening grave may yawn for you.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1789.

—Placidâque ibi demum morte quievit. VIRG.

There calm at length he breathed his soul away.

"O MOST delightful hour by man
Experienced here below,
The hour that terminates his span,
His folly and his woe!

"Worlds should not bribe me back to tread
Again life's dreary waste,
To see again my day o'erspread
With all the gloomy past.

"My home henceforth is in the skies,
Earth, seas, and sun, adieu!
All heaven unfolded to my eyes,
I have no sight for you."

So spake Aspasio, firm possess'd
Of faith's supporting rod,
Then breathed his soul into its rest,
The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few
Sincere on Virtue's side;
And all his strength from Scripture drew,
To hourly use applied.

That rule he prized, by that he fear'd,
He hated, hoped, and loved;
Nor ever frown'd, or sad appear'd,
But when his heart had roved.

For he was frail as thou or I,
And evil felt within;
But when he felt it, heaved a sigh,
And loathed the thought of sin.

Such lived Aspasio; and at last
Call'd up from earth to heaven,
The gulf of death triumphant pass'd,
By gales of blessing driven.

"His joys be mine," each reader cries,
"When my last hour arrives;"
"They shall be yours," my verse replies,
"Such only be your lives."

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1790.

Ne commonentem recta sperne.—BUCHANAN.

Despise not my good counsel.

HE who sits from day to day
Where the prison'd lark is hung,
Heedless of his loudest lay,
Hardly knows that he has sung.

Where the watchman in his round
Nightly lifts his voice on high,
None accustom'd to the sound,
Wakes the sooner for his cry.

So your verse-man I, and Clerk,
Yearly in my song proclaim
Death at hand—yourselves his mark—
And the foe's unerring aim.

Duly at my time I come,
Publishing to all aloud,—
Soon the grave must be your home,
And your only suit a shroud.

But the monitory strain,
Oft repeated in your ears,
Seems to sound too much in vain,
Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth, by all confess'd
Of such magnitude and weight,
Grow, by being oft impress'd,
Trivial as a parrot's prate?

Pleasure's call attention wins,
Hear it often as we may;
New as ever seem our sins,
Though committed every day.

Death and judgment, heaven and hell—
These alone, so often heard,
No more move us than the bell
When some stranger is interr'd.

Oh then, ere the turf or tomb
Cover us from every eye,
Spirit of instruction! come,
Make us learn that we must die.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1792.

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!—VIRG.

Happy the mortal who has traced effects
To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,
And Death and roaring Hell's voracious fires!

THANKLESS for favours from on high,
Man thinks he fades too soon;
Though 'tis his privilege to die,
Would he improve the boon.

But he, not wise enough to scan
His best concerns aright,
Would gladly stretch life's little span
To ages, if he might;

To ages in a world of pain,
To ages, where he goes
Gall'd by affliction's heavy chain,
And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart,
Enamour'd of its harm!
Strange world, that costs it so much smart,
And still has power to charm.

Whence has the world her magic power?
Why deem we Death a foe?
Recoil from weary life's best hour,
And covet longer woe?

The cause is Conscience—Conscience oft
Her tale of guilt renews;
Her voice is terrible though soft,
And dread of Death ensues.

Then anxious to be longer spared
Man mourns his fleeting breath:
All evils then seem light, compared
With the approach of Death.

'Tis judgment shakes him; there's the fear
That prompts the wish to stay:
He has incurr'd a long arrear,
And must despair to pay.

Pay!—follow Christ, and all is paid:
His death your peace ensures;
Think on the grave where He was laid,
And calm descend to yours.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1793.

De sacris autem hæc sit una sententia, ut conserventur. Cic., *De Leg.*
But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things sacred be inviolate.

He lives who lives to God alone,
And all are dead beside;
For other source than God is none
Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite
His love as best we may;
To make his precepts our delight,
His promises our stay.

But life, within a narrow ring
Of giddy joys comprised,
Is falsely named, and no such thing,
But rather death disguised.

Can life in them deserve the name,
Who only live to prove
For what poor toys they can disclaim
An endless life above?

Who, much diseased, yet nothing feel;
Much menaced, nothing dread;
Have wounds which only God can heal,
Yet never ask His aid?

Who deem His house a useless place,
Faith, want of common sense;
And ardour in the Christian race,
A hypocrite's pretence?

Who trample order; and the day
Which God asserts his own
Dishonour with unhallow'd play,
And worship chance alone?

If scorn of God's commands, impress'd
On word and deed, imply
The better part of man unbless'd
With life that cannot die;

Such want it, and that want, uncured
Till man resigns his breath,
Speaks him a criminal, assured
Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course!
Yet so will God repay
Sabbaths profaned without remorse,
And mercy cast away.

LINES COMPOSED FOR A MEMORIAL OF ASHLEY COWPER, ESQ.,

IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS DEATH.* 1788.

Farewell! endued with all that could engage
All hearts to love thee, both in youth and age!
In prime of life, for sprightliness enroll'd
Among the gay, yet virtuous as the old;

* The father of Theodora Cowper, his "*Delia.*"

In life's last stage, (oh blessings rarely found!)
Pleasant as youth with all its blossoms crown'd,
Through every period of this changeful state
Unchanged thyself—wise, good, affectionate!

Marble may flatter, and lest this should seem
O'ercharged with praises on so dear a theme,
Although thy worth be more than half suppress
Love shall be satisfied, and veil the rest.

THE POET'S NEW-YEAR'S GIFT.

Maria!* I have every good
For thee wish'd many a time,
Both sad and in a cheerful mood,
But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,
More prudent, or more sprightly,
Or more ingenious, or more freed
From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour then not yet possess'd
Can I for thee require,
In wedded love already bless'd,
To thy whole heart's desire?

None here is happy but in part;
Full bliss is bliss divine;
There dwells some wish in every heart,
And doubtless one in thine.

That wish, on some fair future day,
Which fate shall brightly gild,
('Tis blameless, be it what it may,)
I wish it all fulfill'd.

THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

Forced from home and all its pleasures,
Afric's coast I left forlorn;
To increase a stranger's treasures,
O'er the raging billows borne.

* Mrs. Throckmorton.

Men from England bought and sold me,
  Paid my price in paltry gold;
But, though slave they have enroll'd me,
  Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,
  What are England's rights, I ask,
Me from my delights to sever,
  Me to torture, me to task?
Fleecy locks and black complexion
  Cannot forfeit nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
  Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating Nature
  Make the plant for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
  Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,
  Lolling at your jovial boards,
Think how many backs have smarted
  For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
  Is there One who reigns on high?
Has He bid you buy and sell us,
  Speaking from His throne, the sky?
Ask Him, if your knotted scourges,
  Matches, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means that duty urges
  Agents of His will to use?

Hark! He answers!—wild tornadoes
  Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
  Are the voice with which He speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
  Afric's sons should undergo,
Fix'd their tyrants' habitations
  Where His whirlwinds answer—No.

By our blood in Afric wasted,
  Ere our necks received the chain;
By the miseries that we tasted,
  Crossing in your barks the main;
By our sufferings, since ye brought us
  To the man-degrading mart,
All sustain'd by patience, taught us
  Only by a broken heart!

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard and stronger
Than the colour of our kind.
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings
Ere you proudly question ours!

PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS.

Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.

I own I am shock'd at the purchase of slaves,
And fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves;
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and groans,
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.

I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
For how could we do without sugar and rum?
Especially sugar, so needful we see;
What, give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea!

Besides if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes
Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains;
If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will;
And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners likewise would give up the trade,
Much more in behalf of your wish might be said;
But, while they get riches by purchasing blacks,
Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind
A story so pat, you may think it is coin'd,
On purpose to answer you, out of my mint;
But I can assure you I saw it in print.

A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest,
Had once his integrity put to the test;
His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,
And ask'd him to go and assist in the job.

He was shock'd, sir, like you, and answer'd, "Oh no!
What! rob our good neighbour? I pray you don't go!
Besides, the man's poor, his orchard's his bread:
Then think of his children, for they must be fed."

"You speak very fine, and you look very grave,
But apples we want, and apples we'll have;
If you will go with us, you shall have a share,
If not, you shall have neither apple nor pear."

They spoke, and Tom ponder'd—"I see they will go;
Poor man! what a pity to injure him so!
Poor man! I would save him his fruit if I could,
But staying behind will do him no good.

"If the matter depended alone upon me,
His apples might hang till they dropp'd from the tree;
But since they will take them, I think I'll go too;
He will lose none by me, though I get a few."

His scruples thus silenced, Tom felt more at ease,
And went with his comrades the apples to seize;
He blamed and protested, but join'd in the plan;
He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man.

THE MORNING DREAM.

'Twas in the glad season of spring,
  Asleep at the dawn of the day,
I dream'd what I cannot but sing,
  So pleasant it seem'd as I lay.
I dream'd that, on ocean afloat,
  Far hence to the westward I sail'd,
While the billows high lifted the boat,
  And the fresh-blowing breeze never fail'd.

In the steerage a woman I saw;
  Such at least was the form that she wore,
Whose beauty impress'd me with awe
  Ne'er taught me by woman before.
She sat, and a shield at her side
  Shed light, like a sun on the waves,
And, smiling divinely, she cried—
  "I go to make freemen of slaves."

Then raising her voice to a strain
  The sweetest that ear ever heard,
She sang of the slave's broken chain
  Wherever her glory appear'd.
Some clouds, which had over us hung,
  Fled, chased by her melody clear,
And methought while she liberty sung,
  'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,
 To a slave-cultur'd island we came,
Where a demon, her enemy, stood—
 Oppression his terrible name.
In his hand, as the sign of his sway,
 A scourge hung with lashes he bore,
And stood looking out for his prey
 From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land
 That goddess-like woman he view'd,
The scourge he let fall from his hand,
 With blood of his subjects imbrued.
I saw him both sicken and die,
 And the moment the monster expired,
Heard shouts that ascended the sky,
 From thousands with rapture inspired.

Awaking, how could I but muse
 At what such a dream should betide?
But soon my ear caught the glad news
 Which served my weak thought for a guide,-
That Britannia, renown'd o'er the waves
 For the hatred she ever has shown
To the black-sceptred rulers of slaves,
 Resolves to have none of her own.

SWEET MEAT HAS SOUR SAUCE;

OR, THE SLAVE-TRADE IN THE DUMPS.

A TRADER I am to the African shore,
But since that my trading is like to be o'er,
I'll sing you a song that you ne'er heard before,
 Which nobody can deny, deny,
 Which nobody can deny.

When I first heard the news it gave me a shock,
Much like what they call an electrical knock,
And now I am going to sell off my stock,
 Which nobody, &c.

'Tis a curious assortment of dainty regales,
To tickle the negroes with when the ship sails,
Fine chains for the neck, and a cat with nine tails,
 Which nobody, &c.

Here's supple-jack plenty, and store of ratan,
That will wind itself round the sides of a man,
As close as a hoop round a bucket or can,
Which nobody, &c.

Here's padlocks and bolts, and screws for the thumbs,
That squeeze them so lovingly till the blood comes;
They sweeten the temper like comfits or plums,
Which nobody, &c.

When a negro his head from his victuals withdraws,
And clenches his teeth and thrusts out his paws,
Here's a notable engine to open his jaws,
Which nobody, &c.

Thus going to market, we kindly prepare
A pretty black cargo of African ware,
For what they must meet with when they get there,
Which nobody, &c.

'Twould do your heart good to see 'em below
Lie flat on their backs all the way as we go,
Like sprats on a gridiron, scores in a row,
Which nobody, &c.

But ah! if in vain I have studied an art
So gainful to me, all boasting apart,
I think it will break my compassionate heart,
Which nobody, &c.

For oh! how it enters my soul like an awl;
This pity, which some people self-pity call,
Is sure the most heart-piercing pity of all,
Which nobody, &c.

So this is my song, as I told you before;
Come, buy off my stock, for I must no more
Carry Cæsars and Pompeys to sugar-cane shore,
Which nobody, &c.

EPIGRAM.

To purify their wine, some people bleed
A lamb into the barrel, and succeed;
No nostrum, planters say, is half so good
To make fine sugar, as a negro's blood.
Now lambs and negroes both are harmless things,
And hence perhaps this wondrous virtue springs.
'Tis in the blood of innocence alone—
Good cause why planters never try their own.

THE YEARLY DISTRESS;

OR, TITHING-TIME AT STOCK, IN ESSEX.

Verses addressed to a country clergyman complaining of the disagreeableness of the day annually appointed for receiving the dues at the parsonage.*

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,
To laugh it would be wrong,
The troubles of a worthy priest,
The burthen of my song.

This priest he merry is and blithe
Three quarters of a year,
But oh! it cuts him like a scythe
When tithing-time draws near.

He then is full of frights and fears,
As one at point to die,
And long before the day appears
He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come, jog, jog,
Along the miry road,
Each heart as heavy as a log,
To make their payments good.

In sooth the sorrow of such days
Is not to be express'd,
When he that takes and he that pays
Are both alike distress'd.

Now all unwelcome at his gates
The clumsy swains alight,
With rueful faces and bald pates;—
He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows,
Each bumpkin of the clan,
Instead of paying what he owes,
Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,
And flings his head before,
And looks as if he came to beg,
And not to quit a score.

"And how does miss and madam do,
The little boy and all?"
"All tight and well. And how do you,
Good Mr. What-d'ye-call?"

The dinner comes, and down they sit:
Were e'er such hungry folk?
There's little talking, and no wit;
It is no time to joke.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,
One spits upon the floor,
Yet not to give offence or grieve,
Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull
And lumpish still as ever;
Like barrels with their bellies full,
They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins.
"Come, neighbours, we must wag,"—
The money chinks, down drop their chins,
Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of frost,
And one of storms of hail,
And one of pigs that he has lost
By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, "A rarer man than you
In pulpit none shall hear;
But yet methinks to tell you true,
You sell it plaguy dear."

Oh why were farmers made so coarse,
Or clergy made so fine?
A kick that scarce would move a horse,
May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home;
'Twould cost him, I dare say,
Less trouble taking twice the sum
Without the clowns that pay.

* Mr. Unwin.

SONNET

ADDRESSED TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.,* 1788.

On his emphatical and interesting Delivery of the Defence of Warren Hastings, Esq., in the House of Lords.

COWPER, whose silver voice, task'd sometimes hard,
Legends prolix delivers in the ears
(Attentive when thou readest) of England's peers,
Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.

Thou wast not heard with drowsy disregard,
Expending late on all that length of plea
Thy generous powers, but silence honour'd thee,
Mute as e'er gazed on orator or bard.

Thou art not voice alone, but hast beside
Both heart and head; and couldst with music sweet
Of Attic phrase and senatorial tone,
Like thy renown'd forefathers, far and wide
Thy fame diffuse, praised not for utterance meet
Of *others'* speech, but magic of *thy own.*

THE DOG AND THE WATER LILY.

NO FABLE.

1788.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs
Swept Ouse's silent tide,
When, 'scaped from literary cares,
I wander'd on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
And high in pedigree,
(Two nymphs† adorn'd with every grace
That spaniel found for me,)

Now wanton'd lost in flags and reeds,
Now starting into sight,
Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse display'd
His lilies newly blown;
Their beauties I intent survey'd,
And one I wish'd my own.

With cane extended far I sought
To steer it close to land;
But still the prize, though nearly caught,
Escaped my eager hand.

Beau mark'd my unsuccessful pains
With fix'd considerate face,
And puzzling set his puppy brains
To comprehend the case.

* The poet's cousin.

† The Gunnings, daughters of Sir Robert Gunning, and great-nieces of the celebrated beauties of George II.'s reign.

But with a cherup clear and strong,
Dispersing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and follow'd long
The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended I return'd;
Beau, trotting far before
The floating wreath again discern'd,
And plunging left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropp'd
Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropp'd
The treasure at my feet.

Charm'd with the sight, "The world," I cried,
"Shall hear of this thy deed:
My dog shall mortify the pride
Of man's superior breed:

"But chief myself I will enjoin,
Awake at duty's call,
To show a love as prompt as thine
To Him who gives me all."

MOTTO FOR A CLOCK.*

Quæ lenta accedit, quam velox præterit hora!
Ut capias, patiens esto, sed esto vigil!

THUS TRANSLATED BY HAYLEY.

Slow comes the hour; its passing speed how great!
Waiting to seize it—vigilantly wait!

ON MRS. MONTAGU'S FEATHER HANGINGS.†

(June, 1788.)

The birds put off their every hue,
To dress a room for Montagu.
The peacock sends his heavenly dyes,
His rainbows and his starry eyes;
The pheasant, plumes which round infold
His mantling neck with downy gold;
The cock his arched tail's azure show;
And, river-blanched, the swan his snow.
All tribes beside of Indian name,
That glossy shine, or vivid flame,
Where rises and where sets the day,
Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,
Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
Proud to advance it all they can.
This plumage neither dashing shower,
Nor blasts that shake the dripping bower,
Shall drench again or discompose,
But screen'd from every storm that blows,
It boasts a splendour ever new,
Safe with protecting Montagu.

* Cowper wrote this motto for a clock which Bacon had sculptured for George III. The clock and lines adorn Her Majesty's presence chamber in Windsor Castle.

† Mrs. Montagu was the daughter of Mr. Robinson, of West Layton in Yorkshire. She was a celebrated literary lady who wrote "A Defence of Shakespeare," &c., and entertained literary people at her house. The feather hangings adorned one of her reception rooms where the "Blue Stocking Club" met.

To the same patroness resort,
Secure of favour at her court,
Strong Genius, from whose forge of thought
Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,
Which, though new-born, with vigour move
Like Pallas, springing arm'd from [Jove;
Imagination scattering round
Wild roses over furrow'd ground,
Which Labour of his frown beguile,
And teach Philosophy a smile;
Wit flashing on Religion's side,
Whose fires, to sacred Truth applied,
The gem, though luminous before,
Obtrude on human notice more,
Like sunbeams on the golden height
Of some tall temple playing bright;
Well tutor'd Learning, from his books
Dismiss'd with grave, not haughty looks,
Their order on his shelves exact,
Not more harmonious or compact
Than that to which he keeps confined
The various treasures of his mind;
All these to Montagu's repair,
Ambitious of a shelter there.
There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,
Their ruffled plumage calm refit,
(For stormy troubles loudest roar
Around their flight who highest soar,)
And in her eye, and by her aid,
Shine safe without a fear to fade.
She thus maintains divided sway
With yon bright regent of the day;
The Plume and Poet both, we know,
Their lustre to his influence owe;
And she the works of Phœbus aiding,
Both Poet saves and Plume from fading.

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. THROCKMORTON'S BULLFINCH.* 1788.

YE Nymphs, if e'er your eyes were red
With tears o'er hapless favourites shed,
Oh, share Maria's grief!
Her favourite, even in his cage,
(What will not hunger's cruel rage?)
Assassined by a thief.

Where Rhenus strays his vines among,
The egg was laid from which he sprung;
And though by nature mute,
Or only with a whistle bless'd,
Well-taught he all the sounds express'd
Of flageolet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll
Were brighter than the sleekest mole,
His bosom of the hue
With which Aurora decks the skies,
When piping winds shall soon arise
To sweep away the dew.

* It was eaten by a rat.

Above, below, in all the house,
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,
No cat had leave to dwell;
And Bully's cage supported stood
On props of smoothest shaven wood,
Large-built and latticed well.

Well-latticed,—but the grate, alas!
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,
For Bully's plumage sake,
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,
With which, when neatly peel'd and dried,
The swains their baskets make.

Night veil'd the pole: all seem'd secure:
When, led by instinct sharp and sure,
Subsistence to provide,
A beast forth sallied on the scout,
Long back'd, long tail'd, with whisker'd snout,
And badger-colour'd hide.

He, entering at the study door,
Its ample area 'gan explore;
And something in the wind
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,
Better than all the books he found,
Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impress'd,
A dream disturbed poor Bully's rest;
In sleep he seem'd to view
A rat fast clinging to the cage,
And, screaming at the sad presage,
Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,
Right to his mark the monster went,—
Ah, Muse! forbear to speak
Minute the horrors that ensued;
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood,—
He left poor Bully's beak.

Oh, had he made that too his prey!
That beak whence issued many a lay
Of such mellifluous tone,
Might have repaid him well, I wot,
For silencing so sweet a throat,
Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps,—the Muses mourn—
So, when by Bacchanalians torn,
On Thracian Hebrus' side,
The tree-enchanter Orpheus fell,
His head alone remain'd to tell
The cruel death he died.

AN EPISTLE TO AN AFFLICTED PROTESTANT LADY* IN FRANCE.

MADAM,—

A STRANGER's purpose in these lays
Is to congratulate and not to praise.
To give the creature the Creator's due
Were sin in me, and an offence to you.
From man to man, or e'en to woman paid,
Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,
A coin by craft for folly's use design'd,
Spurious, and only current with the blind.
The path of sorrow, and that path alone
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown:
No traveller ever reach'd that blest abode,
Who found not thorns and briers in his road.
The world may dance along the flowery plain,
Cheer'd as they go by many a sprightly strain;
Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread,
With unshod feet they yet securely tread;
Admonish'd, scorn the caution and the friend,
Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.
But He, who knew what human hearts would prove,
How slow to learn the dictates of His love,
That, hard by nature and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still,
In pity to the souls His grace design'd
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
Call'd for a cloud to darken all their years,
And said, "Go spend them in the vale of tears!"
O balmy gales of soul-reviving air!
O salutary streams that murmur there!
These flowing from the Fount of Grace above,
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love.
The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys,
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys,

* A Mrs. Billacoys.

An envious world will interpose its frown,
To mar delights superior to its own,
And many a pang experienced still within,
Reminds them of their hated inmate, Sin:
But ills of every shape and every name,
Transform'd to blessings, miss their cruel aim:
And every moment's calm that soothes the breast,
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.
Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast
Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste!
No shepherd's tents within thy view appear,
But the chief Shepherd even there is near;
Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain
Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain;
Thy tears all issue from a source divine,
And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine.
So once in Gideon's fleece the dews were found,
And drought on all the drooping herbs around.

THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

There is a field, through which I ofteu pass,
Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,
Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,
Where oft the bitch-fox hides her hapless brood,
Reserved to solace many a neighbouring squire,
That he may follow them through brake and brier,
Contusion hazarding of neck or spine,
Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.
A narrow brook, by rushy banks conceal'd,
Runs in a bottom, and divides the field;
Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,
But now wear crests of oven-wood instead;
And where the land slopes to its watery bourn
Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn;
Bricks line the sides, but shiver'd long ago,
And horrid brambles intertwine below;
A hollow scooped, I judge, in ancient time,
For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.
Not yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,
With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed;
Nor Autumn yet had brush'd from every spray,
With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away;
But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack;
Now therefore issued forth the spotted pack,

With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats
With a whole gamut fill'd of heavenly notes,
For which, alas! my destiny severe,
Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.
The sun, accomplishing his early march,
His lamp now planted on heaven's topmost arch,
When, exercise and air my only aim,
And heedless whither, to that field I came,
Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound
Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found;
Or with the high-raised horn's melodious clang
All Kilwick and all Dinglederry* rang.
Sheep grazed the field; some with soft bosom press'd
The herb as soft, while nibbling stray'd the rest;
Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,
Struggling, detain'd in many a petty nook.
All seem'd so peaceful, that, from them convey'd,
To me their peace by kind contagion spread.
But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,
'Gan make his instrument of music speak,
And from within the wood that crash was heard,
Though not a hound from whom it burst appear'd,
The sheep recumbent and the sheep that grazed,
All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,
Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,
Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round again;
But recollecting, with a sudden thought,
That flight in circles urged advanced them nought,
They gather'd close around the old pit's brink,
And thought again—but knew not what to think.
The man to solitude accustom'd long,
Perceives in everything that lives a tongue;
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees
Have speech for him, and understood with ease;
After long drought, when rains abundant fall,
He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all;
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,
How glad they catch the largess of the skies;
But, with precision nicer still, the mind
He scans of every locomotive kind;
Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,
That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame;
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
Have all articulation in his ears;
He spells them true by intuition's light,
And needs no glossary to set him right.

* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.

This truth premised was needful as a text,
To win due credence to what follows next.
A while they mused; surveying every face,
Thou hadst supposed them of superior race;
Their periwigs of wool and fears combined,
Stamp'd on each countenance such marks of mind,
That sage they seem'd as lawyers o'er a doubt,
Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out;
Or academic tutors, teaching youths,
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths;
When thus a mutton statelier than the rest,
A ram, the ewes and wethers sad address'd:
"Friends! we have lived too long. I never heard
Sounds such as these, so worthy to be fear'd.
Could I believe that winds for ages pent
In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,
And from their prison-house below arise,
With all these hideous howlings to the skies,
I could be much composed, nor should appear,
For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.
Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders roll'd
All night, me resting quiet in the fold.
Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,
I could expound the melancholy tone;
Should deem it by our old companion made,
The ass; for he, we know, has lately stray'd,
And, being lost, perhaps, and wandering wide,
Might be supposed to clamour for a guide.
But ah! those dreadful yells what soul can hear,
That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear.
Demons produce them doubtless, brazen-claw'd,
And fang'd with brass the demons are abroad;
I hold it therefore wisest and most fit
That, life to save, we leap into the pit."
Him answer'd then his loving mate and true,
But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe:
"How! leap into the pit our life to save?
To save our life leap all into the grave?
For can we find it less? Contemplate first
The depth how awful! falling there we burst:
Or should the brambles interposed our fall
In part abate, that happiness were small;
For with a race like theirs no chance I see
Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.
Meantime, noise kills not. Be it Dapple's bray,
Or be it not, or be it whose it may,
And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues
Of demons utter'd, from whatever lungs,

Sounds are but sounds, and, till the cause appear,
We have at least commodious standing here.
Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast
From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last."
While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,
For Reynard, close attended at his heels
By panting dog, tired man, and spatter'd horse,
Through mere good fortune, took a different course.
The flock grew calm again, and I, the road
Following, that led me to my own abode,
Much wonder'd that the silly sheep had found
Such cause of terror in an empty sound,
So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

MORAL.

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have pass'd away.

ANNUS MEMORABILIS, 1789.

WRITTEN IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S HAPPY RECOVERY.

I RANSACK'D for a theme of song,
Much ancient chronicle, and long;
I read of bright embattled fields,
Of trophied helmets, spears, and shields,
Of chiefs, whose single arm could boast
Prowess to dissipate a host;
Through tomes of fable and of dream
I sought an eligible theme,
But none I found, or found them shared
Already by some happier bard.
To modern times, with truth to guide
My busy search, I next applied;
Here cities won, and fleets dispersed,
Urged loud a claim to be rehearsed,
Deeds of unperishing renown,
Our fathers' triumphs and our own.
Thus as the bee, from bank to bower,
Assiduous sips at every flower,
But rests on none till that be found
Where most nectareous sweets abound,
So I, from theme to theme display'd
In many a page historic stray'd,
Siege after siege, fight after fight,
Contemplating with small delight,
(For feats of sanguinary hue
Not always glitter in my view,)
Till, settling on the current year,
I found the far-sought treasure near.
A theme for poetry divine,
A theme to ennoble even mine,
In memorable Eighty-nine.
The spring of Eighty-nine shall be
An era cherish'd long by me.
Which joyful I will oft record,
And thankful at my frugal board;
For then the clouds of Eighty-eight,
That threaten'd England's trembling state
With loss of what she least could spare,
Her sovereign's tutelary care,
One breath of heaven, that cried—Restore!
Chased, never to assemble more;
And for the richest crown on earth,

It valued by its wearer's worth,
The symbol of a righteous reign
Sat fast on George's brows again.
Then peace and joy again possess'd
Our queen's long agitated breast;
Such joy and peace as can be known
By sufferers like herself alone,
Who losing, or supposing lost,
The good on earth they valued most,
For that dear sorrow's sake forego
All hope of happiness below.
Then suddenly regain the prize,
And flash thanksgivings to the skies!
O Queen of Albion, queen of isles!
Since all thy tears were changed to smiles,
The eyes that never saw thee, shine
With joy not unallied to thine,
Transports not chargeable with art
Illume the land's remotest part,
And strangers to the air of courts,
Both in their toils and at their sports,
The happiness of answer'd prayers,
That gilds thy features, shew in theirs.
If they who on thy state attend,
Awe-struck, before thy presence bend,
'Tis but the natural effect
Of grandeur that insures respect;
But she is something more than queen
Who is beloved where never seen.

ON THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO LONDON,

THE NIGHT OF THE 17TH OF MARCH, 1789.

WHEN, long sequester'd from his throne,
George took his seat again,
By right of worth, not blood alone,
Entitled here to reign;

Then loyalty, with all his lamps
New trimm'd, a gallant show,
Chasing the darkness and the damps,
Set London in a glow.

'Twas hard to tell of streets or squares
Which form'd the chief display,
These most resembling cluster'd stars,
Those the long milky way.

Bright shone the roofs, the dome, the spires,
And rockets flew, self-driven,
To hang their momentary fires
Amid the vault of heaven.

So, fire with water to compare,
The ocean serves on high
Up-spouted by a whale in air,
To express unwieldy joy.

Had all the pageants of the world
In one procession join'd,
And all the banners been unfurl'd
That heralds e'er designed;

For no such sight had England's queen
Forsaken her retreat,
Where, George recover'd made a scene
Sweet always, doubly sweet.

Yet glad she came that night to prove,
A witness undescried,
How much the object of her love
Was loved by all beside.

Darkness the skies had mantled o'er
In aid of her design,—
Darkness, O Queen! ne'er call'd before
To veil a deed of thine.

On borrow'd wheels away she flies,
Resolv'd to be unknown,
And gratify no curious eyes
That night except her own.

Arrived, a night like noon she sees,
And hears the million hum;
As all by instinct, like the bees,
Had known their sovereign come.

Pleased she beheld aloft portray'd
On many a splendid wall,
Emblems of health and heavenly aid,
And George the theme of all.

Unlike the enigmatic line,
So difficult to spell,
Which shook Belshazzar at his wine,
The night his city fell.

Soon, watery grew her eyes and dim,
But with a joyful tear,
None else, except in prayer for him,
George ever drew from her.

It was a scene in every part
Like those in fable feign'd,
And seem'd by some magician's art
Created and sustain'd.

But other magic there, she knew,
Had been exerted none,
To raise such wonders in her view,
Save love of George alone.

That cordial thought her spirit cheer'd,
And through the cumbrous throng,
Not else unworthy to be fear'd,
Convey'd her calm along.

So, ancient poets say, serene
The sea-maid rides the waves,
And fearless of the billowy scene
Her peaceful bosom laves.

With more than astronomic eyes
She view'd the sparkling show;
One Georgian star adorns the skies,
She myriads found below.

Yet let the glories of a night
Like that, once seen, suffice,
Heaven grant us no such future sight,
Such previous woe the price!

ON THE BENEFIT RECEIVED BY HIS MAJESTY FROM SEA-BATHING IN THE YEAR 1789.

O Sovereign of an isle renown'd
For undisputed sway,
Wherever o'er yon gulf profound,
Her navies wing their way,

With juster claims she builds at length
Her empire on the sea,
And well may boast the waves her strength
Which strength restored to Thee.

THE COCK-FIGHTER'S GARLAND.*

Muse—hide his name of whom I sing,
Lest his surviving house thou bring
For his sake into scorn,
Nor speak the school from which he drew
The much or little that he knew,
Nor place where he was born.

* Written on reading the following in the obituary of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for April, 1789:—"At Tottenham, John Ardesoif, Esq., a young man of large fortune, and in the splendour of his carriages and horses rivalled by few country gentlemen. His

That such a man once was, may seem
Worthy of record (if the theme
Perchance may credit win),
For proof to man, what Man may prove,
If grace depart and demons move
The source of guilt within.

This man (for since the howling wild
Disclaims him, man he must be styled)
Wanted no good below,
Gentle he was, if gentle birth
Could make him such; and he had worth,
If wealth can worth bestow.

In social talk and ready jest
He shone superior at the feast,
And qualities of mind,
Illustrious in the eyes of those
Whose gay society he chose
Possess'd of every kind.

Methinks I see him powder'd red,
With bushy locks his well-dress'd head
Wing'd broad on either side,
The mossy rosebud not so sweet;
His steeds superb, his carriage neat
As luxury could provide.

Can such be cruel? Such can be
Cruel as hell, and so was he;
A tyrant entertain'd
With barbarous sports, whose fell delight
Was to encourage mortal fight
'Twixt birds to battle train'd.

One feather'd champion he possess'd,
His darling far beyond the rest,
Which never knew disgrace,
Nor e'er had fought, but he made flow
The life-blood of his fiercest foe,
The Cæsar of his race.

It chanced, at last, when, on a day,
He push'd him to a desperate fray,
His courage droop'd, he fled.
The master storm'd, the prize was lost,
And, instant, frantic at the cost,
He doom'd his favourite dead.

He seized him fast, and from the pit
Flew to the kitchen, snatch'd the spit,
And, "Bring me cord," he cried;
The cord was brought, and, at his word,
To that dire implement the bird
Alive and struggling, tied.

The horrid sequel asks a veil,
And all the terrors of a tale
That can be, shall be, sunk.—
Led by the sufferer's screams aright
His shock'd companions view the sight
And him with fury drunk.

All, suppliant, beg a milder fate
For the old warrior at the grate:
He, deaf to pity's call,
Whirled round him, rapid as a wheel,
His culinary club of steel,
Death menacing on all.

table was that of hospitality, where it may be said, he sacrificed too much to conviviality; but, if he had his foibles, he had his merits also, that far outweighed them. Mr. A. was very fond of cock-fighting, and had a favourite cock upon which he had won many profitable matches. The last bet he laid upon this cock he lost, which so enraged him that he had the bird tied to a spit and roasted alive before a large fire. The screams of the miserable animal were so affecting, that some gentlemen who were present attempted to interfere, which so enraged Mr. A. that he seized a poker, and with the most furious vehemence declared that he would kill the first man who interposed; but, in the midst of his passionate asseverations, he fell down dead upon the spot. Such, we are assured, were the circumstances which attended the death of this great pillar of humanity." [This story was afterwards found to be false, and was contradicted.—ED.]

But vengeance hung not far remote,
For while he stretch'd his clamorous throat,
And heaven and earth defied,
Big with a curse too closely pent
That struggled vainly for a vent,
He totter'd, reel'd, and died.

'Tis not for us, with rash surmise,
To point the judgment of the skies;
But judgments plain as this,
That, sent for man's instruction, bring
A written label on their wing,
'Tis hard to read amiss.

HYMN,

FOR THE USE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT OLNEY.*

Hear, Lord, the song of praise and prayer,
In heaven Thy dwelling place,
From infants made the public care,
And taught to seek Thy face!

Thanks for Thy Word, and for Thy Day;
And grant us, we implore,
Never to waste in sinful play
Thy holy Sabbaths more.

Thanks that we hear,—but oh! impart
To each desires sincere,
That we may listen with our heart,
And learn as well as hear.

For if vain thoughts the minds en-

Of older far than we,
What hope that at our heedless age
Our minds should e'er be free?

Much hope, if Thou our spirits take
Under Thy gracious sway,
Who canst the wisest wiser make,
And babes as wise as they.

Wisdom and bliss Thy word bestows,
A sun that ne'er declines;
And be Thy mercies shower'd on those
Who placed us where it shines.

ON THE RECEIPT OF A HAMPER.†

(IN THE MANNER OF HOMER.)

The straw-stuff'd hamper with his ruthless steel
He open'd, cutting sheer the inserted cords,
Which bound the lid and lip secure. Forth came
The rustling packa[illegible] first, bright straw of wheat,
Or oats, or barley; next a bottle green
Throat-full, clear spirits the contents, distill'd
Drop after drop odorous, by the art
Of the fair mother of his friend—the Rose.

* Written at the request of the Vicar of Olney, to be sung on the occasion of his preaching to the children of the Sunday School.

† Sent by Mr. Rose to the poet.

ON A MISCHIEVOUS BULL,

WHICH THE OWNER OF HIM SOLD AT THE AUTHOR'S INSTANCE.

Go!—thou art all unfit to share
The pleasures of this place
With such as its old tenants are,
Creatures of gentler race.

The squirrel here his hoard provides,
Aware of wintry storms;
And woodpeckers explore the sides
Of rugged oaks for worms.

The sheep here smooths the knotted thorn
With frictions of her fleece;
And here I wander eve and morn,
Like her, a friend to peace.

Ah!—I could pity the exiled
From this secure retreat;—
I would not lose it to be styled
The happiest of the great.

But thou canst taste no calm delight;
Thy pleasure is to shew
Thy magnanimity in fight,
Thy prowess,—therefore, go!

I care not whether east or north,
So I no more may find thee;
The angry muse thus sings thee forth,
And claps the gate behind thee.

VERSES TO THE MEMORY OF DR. LLOYD,*

SPOKEN AT THE WESTMINSTER ELECTION NEXT AFTER HIS DECEASE.

Our good old friend is gone, gone to his rest,
Whose social converse was itself a feast.
O ye of riper years, who recollect
How once ye loved and eyed him with respect,
Both in the firmness of his better day,
While yet he ruled you with a father's sway,
And when impair'd by time, and glad to rest,
Yet still with looks in mild complacence drest,
He took his annual seat, and mingled here
His sprightly vein with yours,—now drop a tear.
In morals blameless as in manners meek,
He knew no wish that he might blush to speak,
But, happy in whatever state below,
And richer than the rich in being so,
Obtain'd the hearts of all, and such a meed
At length from one, as made him rich indeed.
Hence, then, ye titles, hence, not wanted here!
Go, garnish merit in a higher sphere,
The brows of those, whose more exalted lot
He could congratulate, but envied not.

* He was the father of Robert Lloyd, and usher and under-master at Westminster nearly fifty years. He received a handsome retiring pension from the king.

Light lie the turf, good senior, on thy breast!
And tranquil as thy mind was, be thy rest,
Though, living, thou hadst more desert than fame,
And not a stone now chronicles thy name.

ABIIT senex! Periit senex amabilis!
Quo non fuit jucundior.
Lugete vos, ætas quibus maturior
Senem colendum præstitit,
Seu quando, viribus valentioribus
Firmoque fretus pectore,
Florentiori vos juventute excolens
Curâ fovebat patriâ;
Seu quando, fractus, jamque donatus rude,
Vultu sed usque blandulo,
Miscere gaudebat suas facetias
His annuis leporibus.
Vixit probus, purâque simplex indole,
Blandisque comis moribus,
Et dives æquâ mente,—charus omnibus,
Unius auctus munere.
Ite, tituli! Meritis beatioribus
Aptate laudes debitas!
Nec invidebat ille, si quibus favens
Fortuna plus arriserat.
Placide senex! levi quiescas cespite,
Etsi superbum nec vivo tibi
Decus sit inditum, nec mortuo
Lapis notatus nomine.

TO MRS. THROCKMORTON,

ON HER BEAUTIFUL TRANSCRIPT OF HORACE'S ODE "AD LIBRUM SUUM."

MARIA, could Horace have guess'd
What honour awaited his ode *
To his own little volume address'd,
The honour which you have bestow'd,—
Who have traced it in characters here,
So elegant, even, and neat,
He had laugh'd at the critical sneer
Which he seems to have trembled to meet.

* "Two odes by Horace have been lately discovered at Rome; I wanted them transcribed into the blank leaves of a little Horace of mine, and Mrs. Throckmorton performed that service for me; in a blank leaf, therefore, of the same book I wrote the following."—*To Lady Hesketh, Feb.* 9, 1790.

And, "Sneer if you please," he had said,
  "A nymph shall hereafter arise,
Who shall give me, when you are all dead,
  The glory your malice denies;
Shall dignity give to my lay,
  Although but a mere bagatelle;
And even a poet shall say,
  Nothing ever was written so well."

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK,

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANN BODHAM.

Oh that those lips had language! Life has pass'd
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalise—
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it!) here shines on me still the same.
  Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own;
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she.
  My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile!—it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!

But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting words shall pass my lips no more!
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wish'd, I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived;
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learn'd at last submission to my lot;
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.
  Where once we dwelt* our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capp'd,
'Tis now become a history little known,
That once we call'd the pastoral house our own.
Short-lived possession! But the record fair,
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd:
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,
That humour interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honours to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorn'd in heaven, though little noticed here.
  Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin,

* The rectory at Great Berkhampstead, where he was born.

(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile),
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart;—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.
  Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd)
Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods, that shew
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reach'd the shore,
"Where tempests never beat nor billows roar;"*
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchor'd by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distress'd,—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,
Sails ripp'd, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet, oh, the thought that thou art safe, and he!
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise,—
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.
And now, farewell!—Time unrevok'd has run
His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;
To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine;
And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft,
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

* Garth.

INSCRIPTION FOR A STONE

ERECTED AT THE SOWING OF A GROVE OF OAKS AT CHILLINGTON, THE SEAT OF T. GIFFARD, ESQ., JUNE, 1790.

Other stones the era tell,
When some feeble mortal fell;
I stand here to date the birth
Of these hardy sons of Earth.
Which shall longest brave the sky,
Storm and frost—these oaks or I?
Pass an age or two away,
I must moulder and decay;
But the years that crumble me
Shall invigorate the tree,
Spread its branch, dilate its size,
Lift its summit to the skies.
Cherish honour, virtue, truth,
So shalt thou prolong thy youth.
Wanting these, however fast
Man be fix'd, and form'd to last,
He is lifeless even now,
Stone at heart, and cannot grow.

ANOTHER,

FOR A STONE ERECTED ON A SIMILAR OCCASION AT THE SAME PLACE IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

Reader! behold a monument
That asks no sigh or tear,
Though it perpetuate the event
Of a great burial here.

TO MRS. KING,

ON HER KIND PRESENT TO THE AUTHOR, A PATCHWORK COUNTERPANE OF HER OWN MAKING. AUGUST, 1790.

The bard, if e'er he feel at all,
Must sure be quicken'd by a call
Both on his heart and head,
To pay with tuneful thanks the care
And kindness of a lady fair
Who deigns to deck his bed.

A bed like this, in ancient time,
On Ida's barren top sublime,
(As Homer's epic shews,)
Composed of sweetest vernal flowers,
Without the aid of sun or showers,
For Jove and Juno rose.

Less beautiful, however gay,
Is that which in the scorching day
Receives the weary swain,
Who, laying his long scythe aside,
Sleeps on some bank with daisies pied,
Till roused to toil again.

What labours of the loom I see!
Looms numberless have groan'd for me!
Should every maiden come
To scramble for a patch that bears,
The impress of the robe she wears
The bell would toll for some.

And oh, what havoc would ensue!
This bright display of every hue
All in a moment fled!
As if a storm should strip the bowers

Of all their tendrils, leaves, and flowers,—
Each pocketing a shred.

Thanks, then, to every gentle Fair
Who will not come to peck me bare
As bird of borrow'd feather,
And thanks to one above them all,
The gentle fair of Pertenhall,
Who put the whole together.

STANZAS

ON THE LATE INDECENT LIBERTIES TAKEN WITH THE REMAINS OF MILTON. ANNO 1790.*

"Me too, perchance, in future days,
The sculptured stone shall shew,
With Paphian myrtle or with bays
Parnassian on my brow.

"But I, or e'er that season come,
Escaped from every care,
Shall reach my refuge in the tomb,
And sleep securely there."†

So sang, in Roman tone and style,
The youthful bard, ere long
Ordain'd to grace his native isle
With her sublimest song.

Who then but must conceive disdain,
Hearing the deed unblest,
Of wretches who have dared profane
His dread sepulchral rest?

Ill fare the hands that heaved the stones
Where Milton's ashes lay,
That trembled not to grasp his bones
And steal his dust away!

O ill-requited bard! neglect
Thy living worth repaid,
And blind idolatrous respect
As much affronts thee dead.

IN MEMORY OF THE LATE J. THORNTON, ESQ.‡

[*November*, 1790.]

Poets attempt the noblest task they can,
Praising the Author of all good in man,
And, next, commemorating Worthies lost,
The dead in whom that good abounded most.

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* This shocking outrage took place in 1790 whilst the Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, was repairing. The overseers (for the sake of gain) opened a coffin supposed to be Milton's, found a body, extracted its teeth, cut off its hair, and left the remains to the grave-diggers, who exhibited them for money to the public.

† Forsitan et nostros ducat de marmore vultus,
Nectens aut Paphia myrti aut Parnasside lauri
Fronde comas—at ego securâ pace quiescam.
Milton in Manso.

‡ Mr. Thornton was a wealthy merchant, the patron and friend of Newton, to whom he allowed 200*l.* a year (and as much more as he should ask for) to spend in hospitality and charity.

Thee, therefore, of commercial fame, but more
Famed for thy probity from shore to shore;
Thee, Thornton! worthy in some page to shine,
As honest and more eloquent than mine,
I mourn; or, since thrice happy thou must be,
The world, no longer thy abode, not thee.
Thee to deplore were grief misspent indeed;
It were to weep that goodness has its meed,
That there is bliss prepared in yonder sky,
And glory for the virtuous, when they die.
What pleasure can the miser's fondled hoard,
Or spendthrift's prodigal excess afford,
Sweet as the privilege of healing woe
By virtue suffer'd combating below?
That privilege was thine; Heaven gave thee means
To illumine with delight the saddest scenes,
Till thy appearance chased the gloom, forlorn
As midnight, and despairing of a morn.
Thou hadst an industry in doing good,
Restless as his who toils and sweats for food;
Avarice, in thee, was the desire of wealth
By rust unperishable or by stealth;
And if the genuine worth of gold depend
On application to its noblest end,
Thine had a value in the scales of Heaven,
Surpassing all that mine or mint had given.
And, though God made thee of a nature prone
To distribution boundless of thy own,
And still, by motives of religious force
Impell'd thee more to that heroic course,
Yet was thy liberality discreet,
Nice in its choice, and of a temper'd heat;
And though in act unwearied, secret still,
As in some solitude the summer rill
Refreshes, where it winds, the faded green,
And cheers the drooping flowers, unheard, unseen.
Such was thy charity; no sudden start,
After long sleep, of passion in the heart,
But steadfast principle, and in its kind,
Of close relation to the Eternal Mind,
Traced easily to its true source above,
To Him, whose works bespeak His nature, love.
Thy bounties all were Christian, and I make
This record of thee for the Gospel's sake;
That the incredulous themselves may see
Its use and power exemplified in thee.

IN SEDITIONEM HORRENDAM,*

CORRUPTELIS GALLICIS, UT FERTUR, LONDINI NUPER EXORTAM.

PERFIDA, crudelis, victa et lymphata furore,
 Non armis, laurum Gallia fraude petit.
Venalem pretio plebem conducit, et urit
 Undique privatas patriciasque domos.
Nequicquàm conata suâ, fœdissima sperat
 Posse tamen nostrâ nos superare manu.
Gallia, vana struis! Precibus nunc utere! Vinces,
 Nam mites timidis, supplicibusque sumus.

TRANSLATION.

FALSE, cruel, disappointed, stung to the heart,
France quits the warrior's for the assassin's part,
To dirty hands a dirty bribe conveys,
Bids the low street and lofty palace blaze.
Her sons too weak to vanquish us alone,
She hires the worst and basest of our own.
Kneel, France! a suppliant conquers us with ease,
We always spare a coward on his knees.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE POETS.†

Two nymphs, both nearly of an age,
 Of numerous charms possess'd,
A warm dispute once chanced to wage,
 Whose temper was the best.

The worth of each had been complete,
 Had both alike been mild:
But one, although her smile was sweet,
 Frown'd oftener than she smiled.

And in her humour, when she frown'd,
 Would raise her voice and roar,
And shake with fury to the ground
 The garland that she wore.

The other was of gentler cast,
 From all such frenzy clear,
Her frowns were seldom known to last,
 And never proved severe.

To poets of renown in song
 The nymphs referr'd the cause,
Who, strange to tell, all judged it wrong,
 And gave misplaced applause.

They gentle call'd, and kind and soft,
 The flippant and the scold,
And though she changed her mood so oft,
 That failing left untold.

No judges, sure, were e'er so mad,
 Or so resolved to err,—
In short, the charms her sister had
 They lavish'd all on her.

Then thus the god whom fondly they
 Their great inspirer call,

* Cowper wrote these lines believing at the time that the French had (as asserted by the newspapers of the day) instigated the Gordon riots.

† This poem was written in May, 1791, when the season was very backward.

Was heard, one genial summer's day,
To reprimand them all:
"Since thus ye have combined," he said,
"My favourite nymph to slight,
Adorning May, that peevish maid,
With June's undoubted right,

"The minx shall, for your folly's sake,
Still prove herself a shrew,
Shall make your scribbling fingers ache,
And pinch your noses blue."

YARDLEY OAK.*

1791.

SURVIVOR sole, and hardly such, of all
That once lived here, thy brethren! at my birth,
(Since which I number threescore winters past),
A shatter'd veteran, hollow-trunk'd perhaps,
As now, and with excoriate forks deform,
Relics of ages! could a mind, imbued
With truth from heaven, created thing adore,
I might with reverence kneel, and worship thee.
It seems idolatry, with some excuse,
When our forefather Druids in their oaks
Imagined sanctity. The conscience, yet
Unpurified by an authentic act
Of amnesty, the meed of blood divine,
Loved not the light, but, gloomy, into gloom
Of thickest shades, like Adam after taste
Of fruit proscribed, as to a refuge, fled.
Thou wast a bauble once; a cup and ball
Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay,
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloin'd
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down
Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs
And all thine embryo vastness at a gulp.
But Fate thy growth decreed; autumnal rains
Beneath thy parent tree mellow'd the soil
Design'd thy cradle; and a skipping deer,
With pointed hoof dibbling the glebe, prepared
The soft receptacle, in which, secure,
Thy rudiments should sleep the winter through.
So Fancy dreams. Disprove it, if ye can,
Ye reasoners broad awake, whose busy search
Of argument, employed too oft amiss,
Sifts half the pleasures of short life away!

---

* Yardley oak stood in Yardley Chase.

Thou fell'st mature; and, in the loamy clod
Swelling with vegetative force instinct
Didst burst thine egg, as theirs the fabled Twins,
Now stars; two lobes protruding, pair'd exact;
A leaf succeeded, and another leaf,
And, all the elements thy puny growth
Fostering propitious, thou becamest a twig.
Who lived when thou wast such? Oh, couldst thou speak,
As in Dodona once thy kindred trees
Oracular, I would not curious ask
The future, best unknown, but at thy mouth
Inquisitive, the less ambiguous past.
By thee I might correct, erroneous oft,
The clock of history, facts and events
Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts
Recovering, and misstated setting right——
Desperate attempt, till trees shall speak again!
Time made thee what thou wast, king of the woods;
And time hath made thee what thou art—a cave
For owls to roost in. Once thy spreading boughs
O'erhung the champaign; and the numerous flocks
That grazed it, stood beneath that ample cope
Uncrowded, yet safe shelter'd from the storm.
No flock frequents thee now. Thou hast outlived
Thy popularity, and art become
(Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing
Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth.
While thus through all the stages thou hast push'd
Of treeship—first a seedling hid in grass:
Then twig; then sapling; and, as century roll'd
Slow after century, a giant bulk
Of girth enormous, with moss-cushion'd root
Upheaved above the soil, and sides emboss'd
With prominent wens globose,—till at the last
The rottenness, which Time is charged to inflict
On other mighty ones, found also thee.
What exhibitions various hath the world
Witness'd of mutability in all
That we account most durable below!
Change is the diet, on which all subsist,
Created changeable, and change at last
Destroys them. Skies uncertain, now the heat
Transmitting cloudless, and the solar beam
Now quenching in a boundless sea of clouds,—
Calm and alternate storm, moisture and drought,
Invigorate by turns the springs of life
In all that live, plant, animal, and man,
And in conclusion mar them. Nature's threads,

Fine passing thought, e'en in her coarsest works,
Delight in agitation, yet sustain
The force, that agitates not unimpair'd;
But, worn by frequent impulse, to the cause
Of their best tone their dissolution owe.
   Thought cannot spend itself, comparing still
The great and little of thy lot, thy growth
From almost nullity into a state
Of matchless grandeur, and declension thence,
Slow, into such magnificent decay.
Time was when, settling on thy leaf, a fly
Could shake thee to the root--and time has been
When tempests could not. At thy firmest age
Thou hadst within thy bole solid contents,
That might have ribb'd the sides and plank'd the deck
Of some flagg'd admiral; and tortuous arms,
The shipwright's darling treasure, didst present
To the four-quarter'd winds, robust and bold,
Warped into tough knee-timber, many a load!*
But the axe spared thee. In those thriftier days
Oaks fell not, hewn by thousands, to supply
The bottomless demands of contest, waged
For senatorial honours. Thus to Time
The task was left to whittle thee away
With his sly scythe, whose ever-nibbling edge,
Noiseless, an atom and an atom more,
Disjoining from the rest, has, unobserved,
Achieved a labour, which had, far and wide,
By man perform'd, made all the forest ring.
   Embowell'd now, and of thy ancient self
Possessing nought but the scoop'd rind, that seems
A huge throat calling to the clouds for drink,
Which it would give in rivulets to thy root,
Thou temptest none, but rather much forbid'st
The feller's toil, which thou couldst ill requite.
Yet is thy root sincere, sound as the rock,
A quarry of stout spurs, and knotted fangs,
Which, crook'd into a thousand whimsies, clasp
The stubborn soil, and hold thee still erect.
   So stands a kingdom, whose foundation yet
Fails not in virtue, and in wisdom laid,
Though all the superstructure, by the tooth
Pulverised of venality, a shell
Stands now, and semblance only of itself!

* Knee-timber is found in the crooked arms of oak, which, by reason of their distortion, are easily adjusted to the angle formed where the deck and the ship's sides meet.—C.

Thine arms have left thee. Winds have rent them off
Long since, and rovers of the forest wild
With bow and shaft have burnt them. Some have left
A splinter'd stump bleach'd to a snowy white;
And some memorial none where once they grew.
Yet life still lingers in thee, and puts forth
Proof not contemptible of what she can,
Even where death predominates. The spring
Finds thee not less alive to her sweet force
Than yonder upstarts of the neighbouring wood,
So much thy juniors, who their birth received
Half a millennium since the date of thine.
But since, although well qualified by age
To teach, no spirit dwells in thee, nor voice
May be expected from thee, seated here
On thy distorted root, with hearers none,
Or prompter, save the scene, I will perform
Myself the oracle, and will discourse
In my own ear such matter as I may.
One man alone, the father of us all,
Drew not his life from woman; never gazed,
With mute unconsciousness of what he saw,
On all around him; learn'd not by degrees,
Nor owed articulation to his ear;
But, moulded by his Maker into man
At once, upstood intelligent, survey'd
All creatures, with precision understood
Their purport, uses, properties, assign'd
To each his name significant, and, fill'd
With love and wisdom, render'd back to Heaven
In praise harmonious the first air he drew.
He was excused the penalties of dull
Minority. No tutor charged his hand
With the thought-tracing quill, or task'd his mind
With problems. History, not wanted yet,
Lean'd on her elbow, watching Time, whose course,
Eventful, should supply her with a theme. . . .

EPITAPH ON MRS. M. HIGGINS, OF WESTON.

Laurels may flourish round the conqueror's tomb,
But happiest they who win the world to come:
Believers have a silent field to fight,
And their exploits are veil'd from human sight.
They in some nook, where little known they dwell,
Kneel, pray in faith, and rout the hosts of hell;
Eternal triumphs crown their toils divine,
And all those triumphs, Mary, now are thine.

SONNET TO A YOUNG LADY ON HER BIRTHDAY.

Deem not, sweet rose, that bloom'st 'midst many a thorn,
Thy friend, though to a cloister's shade consign'd,
Can e'er forget the charms he left behind,
Or pass unheeded this auspicious morn!
In happier days to brighter prospects born,
Oh tell thy thoughtless sex, the virtuous mind,
Like thee, Content in every state may find,
And look on Folly's pageantry with scorn;
To steer with nicest art betwixt the extreme
Of idle mirth, and affectation coy;
To blend good sense with elegance and ease;
To bid Affliction's eye no longer stream;
Is thine; best gift, the unfailing source of joy,
The guide to pleasures which can never cease!

THE RETIRED CAT.

[1791.]

A Poet's cat,* sedate and grave
As poet well could wish to have,
Was much addicted to inquire
For nooks to which she might retire,
And where, secure as mouse in chink,
She might repose, or sit and think.
I know not where she caught the trick,—
  Nature perhaps herself had cast her
In such a mould philosophique,
  Or else she learn'd it of her master.
Sometimes ascending debonnair,
An apple tree or lofty pear,
Lodged with convenience in the fork,
She watched the gardener at his work;
Sometimes her ease and solace sought
In an old empty watering-pot,
There, wanting nothing, save a fan,
To seem some nymph in her sedan
Apparell'd in exactest sort,
And ready to be borne to court.

* His own cat. Cowper had many pets. Lady Hesketh enumerates five rabbits, three hares, two guinea-pigs, a magpie, a jay, a starling, two goldfinches, two canaries, and two dogs.

But love of change it seems has place
Not only in our wiser race:
Cats also feel as well as we,
That passion's force, and so did she.
Her climbing, she began to find,
Exposed her too much to the wind,
And the old utensil of tin
Was cold and comfortless within;
She therefore wish'd instead of those,
Some place of more serene repose,
Where neither cold might come, nor air
Too rudely wanton with her hair.
And sought it in the likeliest mode
Within her master's snug abode.
A drawer, it chanced, at bottom lined
With linen of the softest kind,
With such as merchants introduce
From India, for the ladies' use,
A drawer impending o'er the rest,
Half open in the topmost chest,
Of depth enough and none to spare,
Invited her to slumber there;
Puss with delight beyond expression
Survey'd the scene and took possession.
Recumbent at her ease ere long,
And lull'd by her own humdrum song,
She left the cares of life behind,
And slept as she would sleep her last,
When in came, housewifely inclined,
The chambermaid, and shut it fast,
By no malignity impell'd,
But all unconscious whom it held.
Awaken'd by the shock, cried Puss,
"Was ever cat attended thus!
The open drawer was left, I see,
Merely to prove a nest for me,
For soon as I was well composed,
Then came the maid and it was closed.
How smooth these 'kerchiefs and how sweet!
Oh what a delicate retreat!
I will resign myself to rest
Till Sol declining in the west,
Shall call to supper, when, no doubt,
Susan will come and let me out."
The evening came, the sun descended,
And Puss remain'd still unattended.
The night roll'd tardily away,
(With her indeed 'twas never day;)

The sprightly morn her course renew'd,
The evening grey again ensued,
And Puss came into mind no more
Than if entomb'd the day before.
With hunger pinch'd, and pinch'd for room,
She now presaged approaching doom,
Nor slept a single wink, or purr'd,
Conscious of jeopardy incurr'd.
That night, by chance, the poet watching,
Heard an inexplicable scratching;
His noble heart went pit-a-pat,
And to himself he said—"What's that?"
He drew the curtain at his side,
And forth he peep'd, but nothing spied.
Yet, by his ear directed, guess'd
Something imprisoned in the chest,
And, doubtful what, with prudent care
Resolved it should continue there.
At length, a voice which well he knew,
A long and melancholy mew,
Saluting his poetic ears,
Consoled him, and dispell'd his fears:
He left his bed, he trod the floor,
He 'gan in haste the drawers explore,
The lowest first, and without stop
The rest in order to the top.
For 'tis a truth well known to most,
That whatsoever thing is lost,
We seek it, ere it come to light,
In every cranny but the right.
Forth skipp'd the cat, not now replete
As erst with airy self-conceit,
Nor in her own fond apprehension
A theme for all the world's attention,
But modest, sober, cured of all
Her notions hyperbolical,
And wishing for a place of rest
Anything rather than a chest.
Then stepp'd the poet into bed
With this reflection in his head:

MORAL.

Beware of too sublime a sense
Of your own worth and consequence.
The man who dreams himself so great
And his importance of such weight,

That all around in all that's done,
Must move and act for him alone,
Will learn in school of tribulation
The folly of his expectation.

ON THE NEGLECT OF HOMER.

Could Homer come himself, distress'd and poor,
And tune his harp at Rhedycina's* door,
The rich old vixen would exclaim, (I fear,)
"Begone! no tramper gets a farthing here."

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

WHICH THE AUTHOR HEARD SING ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

Whence is it, that amazed I hear,
From yonder wither'd spray,
This foremost morn of all the year,
The melody of May?

And why, since thousands would be proud
Of such a favour shewn,
Am I selected from the crowd,
To witness it alone?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me,
For that I also long
Have practised in the groves like thee,
Though not like thee in song?

Or sing'st thou rather under force
Of some divine command,
Commission'd to presage a course
Of happier days at hand?

Thrice welcome then! for many a long
And joyless year have I,
As thou to-day, put forth my song,
Beneath a wintry sky.

But thee no wintry skies can harm,
Who only need'st to sing
To make even January charm,
And every season Spring.

---

* Rhedycina—a Latinized form of the Welsh name for Oxford.

LINES WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM

OF MISS PATTY MORE'S, SISTER OF HANNAH MORE.

(February, 1792.)

In vain to live from age to age
 While modern bards endeavour,
I write my name in Patty's page,
 And gain my point for ever.

EPITAPH ON A FREE BUT TAME REDBREAST,

A FAVOURITE OF MISS SALLY HURDIS.

(March, 1792.)

These are not dewdrops, these are tears,
 And tears by Sally shed,
For absent Robin, who she fears
 With too much cause, is dead.

One morn he came not to her hand
 As he was wont to come,
And, on her finger perch'd, to stand
 Picking his breakfast crumb.

Alarm'd, she call'd him and perplex'd
 She sought him, but in vain;
That day he came not, nor the next,
 Nor ever came again.

She therefore raised him here a tomb,
 Though where he fell or how,
None knows, so secret was his doom,
 Nor where he moulders now.

Had half a score of coxcombs died
 In sōcial Robin's stead,
Poor Sally's tears had soon been dried,
 Or haply never shed.

But Bob was neither rudely bold,
 Nor spiritlessly tame;
Nor was, like theirs, his bosom cold,
 But always in a flame.

ON A MISTAKE IN THE TRANSLATION OF HOMER.

Cowper had sinn'd with some excuse,
If, bound in rhyming tethers,
He had committed this abuse
Of changing ewes for wethers.

But, male for female is a trope,
A rather bold misnomer,
That would have startled even Pope,
When he translated Homer.

LINES ON A LATE THEFT.*

Sweet nymph, who art, it seems, accused
Of stealing George's pen,
Use it thyself, and having used,
E'en give it him again;

The plume of his that has one scrap
Of thy good sense expressed,
Will be a feather in his cap
Worth more than all his *crest*.

SONNET TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

(April, 1792.)

Thy country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,
Hears thee by cruel men and impious call'd
Fanatic, for thy zeal to loose the inthrall'd
From exile, public sale, and slavery's chain.
Friend of the poor, the wrong'd, the fetter-gall'd,
Fear not lest labour such as thine be vain.

Thou hast achieved a part; hast gain'd the ear
Of Britain's senate to thy glorious cause;
Hope smiles, joy springs, and, though cold caution pause
And weave delay, the better hour is near
That shall remunerate thy toils severe
By peace for Afric, fenced with British laws.

Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love
From all the just on earth, and all the blest above.

* Contained in a letter to Mrs. King, dated 8th March, 1792.

TO DR. AUSTEN, OF CECIL STREET, LONDON.

(May, 1792.)

AUSTEN! accept a grateful verse from me,
The poet's treasure, no inglorious fee.
Loved by the muses, thy ingenious mind
Pleasing requital in my verse may find;
Verse oft has dash'd the scythe of Time aside,
Immortalising names which else had died:
And oh! could I command the glittering wealth
With which sick kings are glad to purchase health;
Yet, if extensive fame, and sure to live,
Were in the power of verse like mine to give,
I would not recompense his art with less,
Who, giving Mary* health, heals my distress.
Friend of my friend! I love thee, though unknown,
And boldly call thee, being his, my own.

TO WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.

BY AN OLD SCHOOLFELLOW OF HIS AT WESTMINSTER.

HASTINGS! I knew thee young, and of a mind
While young, humane, conversable, and kind;
Nor can I well believe thee, gentle then,
Now grown a villain, and the worst of men:
But rather some suspect, who have oppress'd
And worried thee, as not themselves the best.

LINES ADDRESSED TO DR. DARWIN,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOTANIC GARDEN."

Two poets,† (poets by report
Not oft so well agree,)
Sweet harmonist of Flora's court!
Conspire to honour thee.

They best can judge the poet's worth,
Who oft themselves have known
The pangs of a poetic birth
By labours of their own.

* Mrs. Unwin. Dr. Austen was a friend of Hayley's.
† Himself and Hayley, a poem by whom accompanied these lines.

We therefore pleased extol thy song,
  Though various yet complete,
Rich in embellishment, as strong
  And learned as 'tis sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise;
  Though, could our hearts repine
At any poet's happier lays,
  They would—they must at thine.

But we, in mutual bondage knit
  Of friendship's closest tie,
Can gaze on even Darwin's wit
  With an unjaundiced eye:

And deem the bard, whoe'er he be,
  And howsoever known,
Who would not twine a wreath for thee,
  Unworthy of his own.

CATHARINA.

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLETON.*

She came—she is gone—we have met—
  And meet perhaps never again;
The sun of that moment is set,
  And seems to have risen in vain.
Catharina has fled like a dream,
  (So vanishes pleasure, alas!)
But has left a regret and esteem
  That will not so suddenly pass.

The last evening ramble we made,
  Catharina, Maria, and I,
Our progress was often delay'd
  By the nightingale warbling nigh.
We paused under many a tree,
  And much she was charm'd with a tone,
Less sweet to Maria and me,
  Who so lately had witness'd her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,
  And gave them a grace so divine,
As only her musical tongue
  Could infuse into numbers of mine.

---

* Afterwards Lady Throckmorton.

The longer I heard, I esteem'd
The work of my fancy the more,
And e'en to myself never seem'd
So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed
In number the days of the year,
Catharina, did nothing impede,
Would feel herself happier here;
For the close-woven arches of limes
On the banks of our river, I know,
Are sweeter to her many times
Than aught that the city can shew.

So it is, when the mind is endued
With a well-judging taste from above,
Then, whether embellish'd or rude,
'Tis nature alone that we love.
The achievements of art may amuse,
May even our wonder excite,
But groves, hills, and valleys diffuse
A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since then in the rural recess
Catharina alone can rejoice,
May it still be her lot to possess
The scene of her sensible choice!
To inhabit a mansion remote
From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,
And by Philomel's annual note
To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,
To wing all her moments at home;
And with scenes that new rapture inspire,
As oft as it suits her to roam;
She will have just the life she prefers,
With little to hope or to fear,
And ours would be pleasant as hers,
Might we view her enjoying it here.

THE SECOND PART.

ON HER MARRIAGE TO GEORGE THROCKMORTON COURTENAY,* ESQ.

(June, 1792.)

Believe it or not, as you chuse,
The doctrine is certainly true,

---

* Brother of Sir John Throckmorton, to whose baronetcy he succeeded.

That the future is known to the muse,
And poets are oracles too.
I did but express a desire
To see Catharina at home,
At the side of my friend George's fire,
And lo!—she is actually come!

Such prophecy some may despise,
But the wish of a poet and friend
Perhaps is approved in the skies,
And therefore attains to its end.
'Twas a wish that flew ardently forth
From a bosom effectually warm'd
With the talents, the graces, and worth
Of the person for whom it was form'd.

Maria* would leave us, I knew,
To the grief and regret of us all,
But less to our grief, could we view
Catharina the Queen of the Hall.
And therefore I wish'd as I did,
And therefore this union of hands,
Not a whisper was heard to forbid,
But all cry, Amen—to the banns.

Since therefore I seem to incur
No danger of wishing in vain,
When making good wishes for her,
I will e'en to my wishes again:
With one I have made her a wife,
And now I will try with another,
Which I cannot suppress for my life,—
How soon I can make her a mother.

SONNET,

ADDRESSED TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.†

(June, 1792.)

HAYLEY—thy tenderness fraternal shewn
In our first interview, delightful guest!
To Mary, and me for her dear sake distress'd,
Such as it is has made my heart thy own,
Though heedless now of new engagements grown;

---

* Lady Throckmorton.

† Author of the "Triumphs of Temper" and other now forgotten poems.

For threescore winters make a wintry breast,
And I had purposed ne'er to go in quest
Of friendship more, except with God alone.
But thou hast won me; nor is God my foe,
Who, ere this last afflictive scene began,
Sent thee to mitigate the dreadful blow,
My brother, by whose sympathy I know
Thy true deserts infallibly to scan,
Not more to admire the Bard than love the Man.

EPITAPH ON FOP,

A DOG BELONGING TO LADY THROCKMORTON.

(August, 1792.)

THOUGH once a puppy, and though Fop by name,
Here moulders one whose bones some honour claim;
No sycophant, although of spaniel race,
And though no hound, a martyr to the chase.
Ye squirrels, rabbits, leverets, rejoice!
Your haunts no longer echo to his voice;
This record of his fate exulting view,
He died worn out with vain pursuit of you.
"Yes,"—the indignant shade of Fop replies—
"And worn with vain pursuit, man also dies."

SONNET TO GEORGE ROMNEY, ESQ.,

ON HIS PICTURE OF ME IN CRAYONS,

Drawn at Eartham in the 61st year of my age, and in the months of August and September, 1792.

(October, 1792.)

ROMNEY, expert infallibly to trace,
On chart or canvas, not the form alone
And semblance, but however faintly shown
The mind's impression too on every face;

With strokes that time ought never to erase,
Thou hast so pencill'd mine, that though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace.

But this I mark,—that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear.
Well—I am satisfied it should be so,
Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear;

For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see
When I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?

THANKS FOR A GIFT OF PHEASANTS.

In Copeman's ear this truth let Echo tell:
"Immortal bards like mortal pheasants well,"
And when his clerkship's out, I wish him herds
Of golden clients, for his golden birds.

AN EPITAPH

ON A POINTER BELONGING TO SIR JOHN THROCKMORTON.

Here lies one who never drew
Blood himself, yet many slew;
Gave the gun its aim, and figure
Made in field, yet ne'er pull'd trigger.
Arm'd men have gladly made
Him their guide, and him obey'd;
At his signified desire
Would advance, present, and fire.
Stout he was, and large of limb,
Scores have fled at sight of him;
And to all this fame he rose
Only following his nose.
Neptune was he call'd; not he
Who controls the boisterous sea,
But of happier command,
Neptune of the furrow'd land;
And, your wonder vain to shorten,
Pointer to Sir John Throckmorton.

ON RECEIVING HAYLEY'S PICTURE.

(January, 1793)

In language warm as could be breath'd or penn'd
Thy picture speaks the original, my friend,

Not by those looks that indicate thy mind,
They only speak thee friend of all mankind;
Expression here more soothing still I see,
That friend of all a partial friend to me.

EPITAPH ON MR. CHESTER, OF CHICHELEY.

(April, 1793.)

Tears flow, and cease not, where the good man lies,
Till all who knew him follow to the skies.
Tears therefore fall where Chester's ashes sleep;
Him wife, friends, brothers, children, servants weep;—
And justly—few shall ever him transcend
As husband, parent, brother, master, friend.

TO MY COUSIN ANNE BODHAM,

ON RECEIVING FROM HER A NETWORK PURSE MADE BY HERSELF.

(May, 1793.)

My gentle Anne, whom heretofore,
When I was young, and thou no more
  Than plaything for a nurse,
I danced and fondled on my knee,
A kitten both in size and glee,—
  I thank thee for my purse.
Gold pays the worth of all things here;
But not of love;—that gem's too dear
  For richest rogues to win it;
I, therefore, as a proof of love,
Esteem thy present far above
  The best things kept within it.

TO MRS. UNWIN.

(May, 1793.)

Mary! I want a lyre with other strings,
Such aid from heaven as some have feign'd they drew,
  An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
And undebased by praise of meaner things,
That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings,

I may record thy worth with honour due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,
And that immortalises whom it sings.
But thou hast little need. There is a book
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
A chronicle of actions just and bright;

There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

TO JOHN JOHNSON,* ESQ.,

ON HIS PRESENTING ME WITH AN ANTIQUE BUST OF HOMER.

(May, 1793.)

KINSMAN beloved, and as a son, by me!
When I behold the fruit of thy regard,
The sculptured form of my old favourite bard,
I reverence feel for him, and love for thee.
Joy too and grief. Much joy that there should be,
Wise men and learn'd, who grudge not to reward
With some applause my bold attempt and hard,
Which others scorn: critics by courtesy.
The grief is this, that, sunk in Homer's mine,
I lose my precious years now soon to fail,
Handling his gold, which, howsoe'er it shine,
Proves dross when balanced in the Christian scale.
Be wiser thou;—like our forefather Donne,
Seek heavenly wealth, and work for God alone.

INSCRIBED ON THE BUST OF HOMER,

PRESENTED TO COWPER BY MR. JOHN JOHNSON, AND NOW IN THE WILDERNESS AT WESTON.

Εἰκονα τις ταυτην;—κλυτον ἀνερος ὀνομ' ὀλωλεν.
Ουνομα δ' ουτος ἀνηρ αφθιτον αἰεν εχει.

THE sculptor?—nameless, though once dear to fame;
But This Man bears an everlasting name.

* The grandson of Cowper's uncle. He cheered the last years of the poet.

TO A YOUNG FRIEND,

ON HIS ARRIVING AT CAMBRIDGE WET WHEN NO RAIN HAD FALLEN THERE.

If Gideon's fleece, which drench'd with dew he found,
While moisture none refresh'd the herbs around,
Might fitly represent the church, endow'd
With heavenly gifts to heathens not allow'd;
In pledge, perhaps, of favours from on high,
Thy locks were wet when others' locks were dry.
Heaven grant us half the omen,—may we see
Not drought on others, but much dew on thee!

INSCRIPTION FOR A HERMITAGE IN THE AUTHOR'S GARDEN.

(May, 1793.)

This cabin, Mary, in my sight appears,
Built as it has been in our waning years,
A rest afforded to our weary feet,
Preliminary to—the last retreat.

INSCRIPTION FOR A MOSS-HOUSE IN THE SHRUBBERY AT WESTON.

Here, free from riot's hated noise,
Be mine, the calmer, purer joys
  A friend or book bestows;
Far from the storms that shake the great,
Contentment's gale shall fan my seat,
  And sweeten my repose.

INSCRIPTION FOR A GARDEN SHED,

BUILT IN A FAR MORE EXPENSIVE WAY THAN WAS DESIGNED.

Beware of building! I intended
Rough logs and thatch, and thus it ended.

EPIGRAM ON THE SAME CIRCUMSTANCE.*

Instead of a pound or two, spending a mint,
Must serve me at least, I believe, with a hint,
That building and building a man may be driven
At last out of doors, and have no house to live in.

ON ABBOTT'S PORTRAIT OF HIM;

ADDRESSED TO HAYLEY.

(July 15, 1792.)

Abbott is painting me so true,
That (trust me) you would stare,
And hardly know at the first view,
If I were here or there.

THE FOUR AGES.

(A BRIEF FRAGMENT OF AN EXTENSIVE PROJECTED POEM.)

"I could be well content, allow'd the use
Of past experience, and the wisdom glean'd
From worn-out follies, now acknowledged such,
To recommence life's trial, in the hope
Of fewer errors, on a second proof!"
Thus while grey evening lull'd the wind, and call'd
Fresh odours from the shrubbery at my side,
Taking my lonely winding walk, I mused,
And held accustom'd conference with my heart;
When from within it thus a voice replied:
"Couldst thou in truth? and art thou taught at length
This wisdom, and but this, from all the past?
Is not the pardon of thy long arrear,
Time wasted, violated laws, abuse

* Cowper thus explains the inscription in a letter to Hayley, July 24, 1793.—"I said to my Sam: 'Sam, build me a shed in the garden, with anything that you can find, and make it rude and rough, like one of those at Eartham.' 'Yes, sir,' says Sam; and straightway laying his own noddle, and the carpenter's noddle together, has built me a thing fit for Stow Gardens."

Of talents, judgment, mercies, better far
Than opportunity vouchsafed to err
With less excuse, and, haply, worse effect?"
  I heard, and acquiesced: then to and fro
Oft pacing, as the mariner his deck,
My gravelly bounds, from self to human kind
I pass'd, and next consider'd, what is man?
  Knows he his origin? Can he ascend
By reminiscence to his earliest date?
Slept he in Adam? And in those from him
Through numerous generations, till he found
At length his destined moment to be born?
Or was he not, till fashion'd in the womb?
Deep mysteries both! which schoolmen must have toil'd
To unriddle, and have left them mysteries still.
  It is an evil incident to man,
And of the worst, that unexplored he leaves
Truths useful and attainable with ease,
To search forbidden deeps, where mystery lies
Not to be solved, and useless, if it might.
Mysteries are food for angels; they digest
With ease, and find them nutriment; but man,
While yet he dwells below, must stoop to glean
His manna from the ground, or starve and die.

ON A PLANT OF VIRGIN'S BOWER,

DESIGNED TO COVER A GARDEN-SEAT.

THRIVE, gentle plant! and weave a bower
    For Mary* and for me,
And deck with many a splendid flower,
    Thy foliage large and free.

Thou cam'st from Eartham, and wilt shade,
    (If truly I divine,)
Some future day the illustrious head
    Of him who made thee mine.

Should Daphne shew a jealous frown,
    And Envy seize the bay,
Affirming none so fit to crown
    Such honour'd brows as they,

* Mrs. Unwin.

Thy cause with zeal we shall defend,
And with convincing power;
For why should not the Virgin's friend
Be crown'd with Virgin's Bower?

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

(June, 1793.)

DEAR architect of fine chateaux in air,
Worthier to stand for ever, if they could
Than any built of stone, or yet of wood,
For back of royal elephant to bear;

Oh for permission from the skies to share,
Much to my own, though little to thy good,
With thee (not subject to the jealous mood!)
A partnership of literary ware!*

But I am bankrupt now; and doomed henceforth
To drudge, in descant dry, on others' lays;
Bards, I acknowledge, of unequall'd worth!
But what is commentator's happiest praise?

That he has furnish'd lights for other eyes,
Which they who need them use, and then despise.

A TALE,† FOUNDED ON FACT.

(June, 1793.)

IN Scotland's realm, where trees are few,
Nor even shrubs abound;
But where, however bleak the view,
Some better things are found;

* Hayley had proposed to share some literary work (it is not known what) with Cowper.

† This tale is founded on an article which appeared in the *Buckinghamshire Herald*, Saturday, June 1, 1792:—Glasgow, May 23. In a block, or pulley, near the head of the mast of a gabbert, now lying at the Broomielaw, there is a chaffinch's nest and four eggs. The nest was built while the vessel lay at Greenock, and was followed hither by both birds. Though the block is occasionally lowered for the inspection of the curious, the birds have not forsaken the nest. The cock, however, visits the nest but seldom, while the hen never leaves it but when she descends to the hull for food."

For husband there and wife may boast
Their union undefiled,
And false ones are as rare almost
As hedgerows in the wild;

In Scotland's realm forlorn and bare
The history chanced of late—
The history of a wedded pair,
A chaffinch and his mate.

The spring drew near, each felt a breast
With genial instinct fill'd;
They pair'd, and would have built a nest,
But found not where to build.

The heaths uncover'd and the moors
Except with snow and sleet,
Sea-beaten rocks and naked shores
Could yield them no retreat.

Long time a breeding place they sought,
Till both grew vexed and tired;
At length a ship arriving brought
The good so long desired.

A ship?—could such a restless thing
Afford them place of rest?
Or was the merchant charged to bring
The homeless birds a nest?

Hush!—silent hearers profit most—
This racer of the sea
Proved kinder to them than the coast,
It served them with a tree.

But such a tree! 'twas shaven deal,
The tree they call a mast,
And had a hollow with a wheel
Through which the tackle pass'd.

Within that cavity aloft
Their roofless home they fix'd,
Formed with materials neat and soft,
Bents, wool, and feathers mix'd.

Four ivory eggs soon pave its floor,
With russet specks bedight;
The vessel weighs, forsakes the shore,
And lessens to the sight.

The mother-bird is gone to sea,
As she had changed her kind;
But goes the male? Far wiser, he
Is doubtless left behind.

No—soon as from ashore he saw
The wingèd mansion move,
He flew to reach it, by a law
Of never-failing love;

Then perching at his consort's side,
Was briskly borne along,
The billows and the blast defied,
And cheer'd her with a song.

The seaman with sincere delight
His feather'd shipmates eyes,
Scarce less exulting in the sight
Than when he tows a prize.

For seamen much believe in signs,
And from a chance so new
Each some approaching good divines,
And may his hopes be true!

Hail, honour'd land! a desert where
Not even birds can hide,
Yet parent of this loving pair
Whom nothing could divide.

And ye who, rather than resign
Your matrimonial plan,
Were not afraid to plough the brine
In company with man;

For whose lean country much disdain
We English often shew;
Yet from a richer nothing gain
But wantonness and woe;

Be it your fortune, year by year,
The same resource to prove,
And may ye sometimes landing here,
Instruct us how to love!

ON A SPANIEL, CALLED BEAU, KILLING A YOUNG BIRD.

(July, 1793.)

A SPANIEL, Beau, that fares like you,
Well fed, and at his ease,
Should wiser be than to pursue
Each trifle that he sees.

But you have kill'd a tiny bird,
Which flew not till to-day,
Against my orders, whom you heard
Forbidding you the prey.

Nor did you kill that you might eat,
And ease a doggish pain,
For him, though chased with furious heat,
You left where he was slain.

Nor was he of the thievish sort,
Or one whom blood allures,
But innocent was all his sport
Whom you have torn for yours.

My dog! what remedy remains,
Since, teach you all I can,
I see you, after all my pains,
So much resemble man?

BEAU'S REPLY.

Sir, when I flew to seize the bird
In spite of your command,
A louder voice than yours I heard,
And harder to withstand.

You cried—Forbear!—but in my breast
A mightier cried—Proceed!—
'Twas Nature, Sir, whose strong behest
Impell'd me to the deed.

Yet much as Nature I respect,
I ventured once to break
(As you perhaps may recollect)
Her precept for your sake;

And when your linnet on a day,
Passing his prison door,
Had flutter'd all his strength away,
And panting press'd the floor,

Well knowing him a sacred thing,
Not destined to my tooth,
I only kiss'd his ruffled wing,
And licked the feathers smooth.

Let my obedience then excuse
My disobedience now,
Nor some reproof yourself refuse
From your aggrieved bow-wow:

If killing birds be such a crime,
(Which I can hardly see,)
What think you, Sir, of killing Time
With verse address'd to me?

TO THE SPANISH ADMIRAL, COUNT GRAVINA,

ON HIS TRANSLATING THE AUTHOR'S SONG ON A ROSE INTO ITALIAN VERSE.

(1793.)

My Rose, Gravina, blooms anew,
And steep'd not now in rain,
But in Castalian streams by you,
Will never fade again.

TO MARY.*

(1793.)

The twentieth year is well nigh past
Since first our sky was overcast;—
Ah would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow;—
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

* Mrs. Unwin.

But well thou play'dst the housewife's part,
And all thy threads with magic art
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language utter'd in a dream:
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet gently press'd, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou provest,
That now at every step thou movest,
Upheld by two; yet still thou lovest,
My Mary!

And still to love, though press'd with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

ON RECEIVING HEYNE'S VIRGIL

FROM MR. HAYLEY.

(October, 1793.)

I SHOULD have deem'd it once an effort vain
To sweeten more sweet Maro's matchless strain,
But from that error now behold me free,
Since I received him as a gift from thee.

ANSWER

TO STANZAS ADDRESSED TO LADY HESKETH, BY MISS CATHARINE FANSHAWE, IN RETURNING A POEM OF MR. COWPER'S, LENT TO HER ON CONDITION SHE SHOULD NEITHER SHOW IT, NOR TAKE A COPY.*

To be remember'd thus is fame,
And in the first degree;
And did the few like her the same,
The press might sleep for me.

So Homer, in the memory stored
Of many a Grecian belle,
Was once preserved—a richer hoard,
But never lodged so well.

INSCRIPTION FOR THE TOMB OF MR. HAMILTON.

PAUSE here, and think: a monitory rhyme
Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.
Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein;
Seems it to say—"Health here has long to reign"?
Hast thou the vigour of thy youth? an eye
That beams delight? a heart untaught to sigh?
Yet fear. Youth, ofttimes healthful and at ease,
Anticipates a day it never sees;
And many a tomb, like Hamilton's, aloud
Exclaims, "Prepare thee for an early shroud."

* Miss Fanshawe returned the poem, with some stanzas, informing her friend that she had obeyed the letter of the "harsh command," but had committed the verses to memory.

MONTES GLACIALES, IN OCEANO GERMANICO NATANTES.*

(March 12th, 1799.)

En, quæ prodigia, ex oris allata remotis,
Oras adveniunt pavefacta per æquora nostras!
Non equidem priscæ sæclum rediisse videtur
Pyrrhæ, cum Proteus pecus altos visere montes
Et sylvas, egit. Sed tempora vix leviora
Adsunt, evulsi quando radicitus alti
In mare descendunt montes, fluctusque pererrant.
Quid verò hoc monstri est magis et mirabile visu?
Splendentes video, ceu pulchro ex ære vel auro
Conflatos, rutilisque accinctos undique gemmis,
Baccâ cæruleâ, et flammas imitante pyropo.
Ex oriente adsunt, ubi gazas optima tellus
Parturit omnigenas, quibus æva per omnia sumptu
Ingenti finxêre sibi diademata reges?
Vix hoc crediderim. Non fallunt talia acutos
Mercatorum oculos: prius et quàm littora Gangis
Liquissent, avidis gratissima præda fuissent.
Ortos unde putëmus? An illos Ves'vius atrox
Protulit, ignivomisve ejecit faucibus Ætna?
Luce micant propriâ, Phœbive, per aëra purum
Nunc stimulantis equos, argentea tela retorquent?
Phœbi luce micant. Ventis et fluctibus altis
Appulsi, et rapidis subter currentibus undis,
Tandem non fallunt oculos. Capita alta videre est
Multâ onerata nive et canis conspersa pruinis.
Cætera sunt glacies. Procul hinc, ubi Bruma ferè omnes
Contristat menses, portenta hæc horrida nobis
Illa strui voluit. Quoties de culmine summo
Clivorum fluerent in littora prona, solutæ
Sole, nives, propero tendentes in mare cursu,
Illa gelu fixit. Paulatim attollere sese
Mirum cœpit opus; glacieque ab origine rerum.
In glaciem aggestâ sublimes vertice tandem
Æquavit montes, non crescere nescia moles.
Sic immensa diu stetit, æternumque stetisset
Congeries, hominum neque vi neque mobilis arte,
Littora ni tandem declivia deseruisset,
Pondere victa suo. Dilabitur. Omnia circum
Antra et saxa gemunt, subito concussa fragore,

* This poem was suggested by a paragraph in the newspapers, describing enormous icebergs which had been seen drifting in the German Ocean.

Dum ruit in pelagum, tanquam studiosa natandi,
Ingens tota strues. Sic Delos dicitur olim,
Insula, in Ægæo fluitâsse erratica ponto.
Sed non ex glacie Delos; neque torpida Delum
Bruma inter rupes genuit nudum sterilemque.
Sed vestita herbis erat illa, ornataque nunquam
Deciduâ lauro; et Delum dilexit Apollo.
At vos, errones horrendi, et caligine digni
Cimmeriâ, Deus idem odit. Natalia vestra,
Nubibus involvens frontem, non ille tueri
Sustinuit. Patrium vos ergo requirite cœlum!
Ite! Redite! Timete moras; ni lenitèr austro
Spirante, et nitidas Phœbo jaculante sagittas
Hostili vobis, pereatis gurgite misti!

ON THE ICE ISLANDS SEEN FLOATING IN THE GERMAN OCEAN.

(March 19th, 1799.)

What portents, from what distant region, ride,
Unseen till now in ours, the astonish'd tide?
In ages past, old Proteus, with his droves
Of sea-calves, sought the mountains and the groves;
But now, descending whence of late they stood,
Themselves the mountains seem to rove the flood;
Dire times were they, full charged with human woes;
And these, scarce less calamitous than those.
What view we now? More wondrous still! Behold!
Like burnish'd brass they shine, or beaten gold;
And all around the pearl's pure splendour show,
And all around the ruby's fiery glow.
Come they from India, where the burning earth,
All-bounteous, gives her richest treasures birth;
And where the costly gems, that beam around
The brows of mightiest potentates, are found
No. Never such a countless dazzling store
Had left unseen the Ganges' peopled shore;
Rapacious hands, and ever-watchful eyes,
Should sooner far have marked and seized the prize.
Whence sprang they then? Ejected have they come
From Ves'vius', or from Etna's burning womb?
Thus shine they self-illumed, or but display
The borrow'd splendours of a cloudless day?
With borrow'd beams they shine. The gales that breathe
Now landward, and the current's force beneath,

Have borne them nearer: and the nearer sight,
Advantaged more, contemplates them aright.
Their lofty summits crested high they shew,
With mingled sleet, and long-incumbent snow.
The rest is ice. Far hence, where, most severe,
Bleak winter well-nigh saddens all the year,
Their infant growth began. He bade arise
Their uncouth forms, portentous in our eyes.
Oft as dissolved by transient suns, the snow
Left the tall cliff to join the flood below;
He caught, and curdled with a freezing blast
The current, ere it reach'd the boundless waste.
By slow degrees uprose the wondrous pile,
And long successive ages roll'd the while,
Till, ceaseless in its growth, it claim'd to stand
Tall as its rival mountains on the land.
Thus stood, and unremovable by skill
Or force of man, had stood the structure still,
But that, though firmly fix'd, supplanted yet
By pressure of its own enormous weight,
It left the shelving beach—and with a sound
That shook the bellowing waves and rocks around,
Self-launch'd, and swiftly, to the briny wave,
As if instinct with strong desire to lave,
Down went the ponderous mass. So bards of old
How Delos swam the Ægean deep have told.
But not of ice was Delos. Delos bore
Herb, fruit, and flower. She, crown'd with laurel, wore,
Even under wintry skies, a summer smile;
And Delos was Apollo's favourite isle.
But, horrid wanderers of the deep, to you
He deems Cimmerian darkness only due.
Your hated birth he deign'd not to survey,
But, scornful, turn'd his glorious eyes away.
Hence! Seek your home, nor longer rashly dare
The darts of Phœbus, and a softer air;
Lest ye regret, too late, your native coast,
In no congenial gulf for ever lost!

THE CASTAWAY.*

(March 20th, 1799.)

OBSCUREST night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roar'd,

* This was Cowper's last original poem. It is founded on an anecdote related in Anson's voyages.

When such a destined wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain;
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted; nor his friends had fail'd
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd,
That pitiless perforce
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford;
And, such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
Delay'd not to bestow:
But he, they knew, nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean, self-upheld:
And so long he, with unspent power,
His destiny repell'd;
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried—"Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more:

For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him; but the page
  Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
  Is wet with Anson's tear:
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalise the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
  Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
  A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
  No light propitious shone,
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
  W[illegible]ish'd, each alone:
But [illegible] rougher sea,
 And [illegible]eeper gulfs than he.



TRANSLATION OF PSALM CXXXVII.

To Babylon's proud waters brought,
  In bondage where we lay,
With tears on Sion's Hill we thought,
  And sighed our hours away;
Neglected on the willows hung
Our useless harps, while every tongue
  Bewailed the fatal day.

Then did the base insulting foe
  Some joyous notes demand,
Such as in Sion used to flow
  From Judah's happy band:
Alas! what joyous notes have we,
Our country spoiled, no longer free,
  And in a foreign land?

O Solyma! if e'er thy praise
  Be silent in my song,
Rude and unpleasing be the lays,
  And artless be my tongue!
Thy name my fancy still employs;
To thee, great fountain of my joys,
  My sweetest airs belong.

Remember, Lord! that hostile sound,
  When Edom's children cried,
"Razed be her turrets to the ground,
  And humbled be her pride!"
Remember, Lord! and let the foe
The terrors of thy vengeance know,
  Thy vengeance they defied!

Thou too, great Babylon, shalt fall
  A victim to our God;
Thy monstrous crimes already call
  For heaven's chastising rod.
Happy who shall thy little ones
Relentless dash against the stones,
  And spread their limbs abroad.

TRANSLATION OF GREEK VERSES.

THE SPARTAN MOTHER, BY JULIANUS.

A Spartan, his companion slain,
  Alone from battle fled;
His mother kindling with disdain
  That she had borne him, struck him dead;
For courage, and not birth alone,
In Sparta, testifies a son!

ON THE SAME, BY PALLADAS.*

A Spartan 'scaping from the fight,
His mother met him in his flight,
Upheld a falchion to his breast,
And thus the fugitive addressed:
"Thou canst but live to blot with shame
Indelible thy mother's name,
While every breath that thou shalt draw
Offends against thy country's law;
But, if thou perish by this hand,
Myself indeed throughout the land,
To my dishonour, shall be known
The mother still of such a son;
But Sparta will be safe and free,
And that shall serve to comfort me."

AN EPITAPH.

My name—my country—what are they to thee?
What, whether base or proud my pedigree?
Perhaps I far surpassed all other men—
Perhaps I fell below them all—what then?
Suffice it, stranger! that thou seest a tomb—
Thou know'st its use—it hides—no matter whom.

ANOTHER.

Take to thy bosom, gentle earth, a swain
With much hard labour in thy service worn!

---

* He lived in the fifth century.

He set the vines that clothe yon ample plain,
And he these olives that the vale adorn.
He filled with grain the glebe; the rills he led
Through this green herbage, and those fruitful bowers;
Thou, therefore, earth! lie lightly on his head,
His hoary head, and deck his grave with flowers.

ANOTHER.

PAINTER, this likeness is too strong,
And we shall mourn the dead too long.

ANOTHER.

AT threescore winters' end I died,
A cheerless being, sole and sad;
The nuptial knot I never tied,
And wish my father never had.

ON MELANIPPUS AND HIS SISTER, BY CALLIMACHUS.*

AT morn we placed on his funereal bier
Young Melanippus; and at eventide,
Unable to sustain a loss so dear,
By her own hand his blooming sister died.
Thus Aristippus mourned his noble race,
Annihilated by a double blow,
Nor son could hope, nor daughter more to embrace,
And all Cyrene saddened at his woe.

ON MILTIADES.

MILTIADES! thy valour best
(Although in every region known)
The men of Persia can attest,
Taught by thyself at Marathon.

ON AN INFANT.

BEWAIL not much, my parents! me, the prey
Of ruthless Ades, and sepulchred here.
An infant, in my fifth scarce finished year,

* An Alexandrian poet who lived in the third century B.C.

He found all sportive, innocent, and gay,
Your young Callimachus; and if I knew
Not many joys, my griefs were also few.

ON ARETIMIAS, BY HERACLIDES.

In Cnidus born, the consort I became
Of Euphron. Aretimias was my name.
His bed I shared, nor proved a barren bride,
But bore two children at a birth, and died.
One child I leave to solace and uphold
Euphron hereafter, when infirm and old.
And one, for his remembrance sake, I bear
To Pluto's realm, till he shall join me there.

ON A REED-PEN.

I was of late a barren plant,
Useless, insignificant,
Nor fig, nor grape, nor apple bore,
A native of the marshy shore;
But gathered for poetic use,
And plunged into a sable juice,
Of which my modicum I sip,
With narrow mouth and slender lip,
At once, although by nature dumb,
All eloquent I have become,
And speak with fluency untired,
As if by Phœbus self inspired.

TO HEALTH.

Eldest-born of powers divine!
Blessed Hygeia! be it mine
To enjoy what thou canst give,
And henceforth with thee to live:
For in power if pleasure be,
Wealth or numerous progeny,
Or in amorous embrace,
Where no spy infests the place;
Or in aught that heaven bestows
To alleviate human woes,
When the wearied heart despairs
Of a respite from its cares;
These and every true delight
Flourish only in thy sight;

And the sister Graces three
Owe, themselves, their youth to thee,
Without whom we may possess
Much, but never happiness.

ON THE ASTROLOGERS.

The astrologers did all alike presage
My uncle's dying in extreme old age;
One only disagreed. But he was wise,
And spoke not till he heard the funeral cries.

ON AN OLD WOMAN.

Mycilla dyes her locks, 'tis said;
But 'tis a foul aspersion;
She buys them black; they therefore need
No subsequent immersion.

ON INVALIDS.

Far happier are the dead, methinks, than they
Who look for death, and fear it every day.

ON FLATTERERS.

No mischief worthier of our fear
In nature can be found,
Than friendship, in ostent sincere,
But hollow and unsound.
And lulled into a dangerous dream
We close infold a foe,
Who strikes, when most secure we seem,
The inevitable blow.

TO THE SWALLOW.

Attic maid! with honey fed,
Bear'st thou to thy callow brood
Yonder locust from the mead,
Destined their delicious food?

Ye have kindred voices clear,
Ye alike unfold the wing,
Migrate hither, sojourn here,
Both attendant on the spring

Ah! for pity drop the prize;
Let it not with truth be said,
That a songster gasps and dies,
That a songster may be fed.

ON LATE ACQUIRED WEALTH.

Poor in my youth, and in life's later scenes
Rich to no end, I curse my natal hour,
Who nought enjoyed while young, denied the means;
And nought when old enjoyed, denied the power.

ON A TRUE FRIEND.

Hast thou a friend? Thou hast indeed
A rich and large supply,
Treasure to serve your every need,
Well managed, till you die.

ON A BATH, BY PLATO.

Did Cytherea to the skies
From this pellucid lymph arise?
Or was it Cytherea's touch,
When bathing here, that made it such?

ON A FOWLER, BY ISIODORUS.

With seeds and birdlime, from the desert air,
Eumelus gathered free, though scanty, fare.
No lordly patron's hand he deigned to kiss,
Nor luxury knew, save liberty, nor bliss.
Thrice thirty years he lived, and to his heirs
His seeds bequeathed, his birdlime, and his snares.

ON NIOBE.*

Charon! receive a family on board
Itself sufficient for thy crazy yawl;
Apollo and Diana, for a word
By me too proudly spoken, slew us all.

* She boasted that her children were more beautiful than Apollo and Diana, who in their rage slew her whole family, and she wept herself into stone.

ON A GOOD MAN.

TRAVELLER, regret me not; for thou shalt find
Just cause of sorrow none in my decease,
Who, dying, children's children left behind,
And with one wife lived many a year in peace:
Three virtuous youths espoused my daughters three,
And oft their infants in my bosom lay,
Nor saw I one, of all derived from me,
Touched with disease, or torn by death away.
Their duteous hands my funeral rites bestowed,
And me, by blameless manners fitted well
To seek it, sent to the serene abode
Where shades of pious men for ever dwell.

ON A MISER.

THEY call thee rich—I deem thee poor,
Since, if thou dar'st not use thy store,
But sav'st it only for thine heirs,
The treasure is not thine, but theirs.

ANOTHER.

A MISER, traversing his house,
Espied, unusual there, a mouse,
And thus his uninvited guest
Briskly inquisitive addressed:
"Tell me, my dear, to what cause is it
I owe this unexpected visit?"
The mouse her host obliquely eyed,
And, smiling, pleasantly replied:
"Fear not, good fellow, for your hoard!
I come to lodge, and not to board."

ANOTHER.

ART thou some individual of a kind
Long lived by nature as the rook or hind?
Heap treasure, then, for if thy need be such,
Thou hast excuse, and scarce canst heap too much.
But man thou seem'st, clear therefore from thy breast
This lust of treasure—folly at the best!
For why shouldst thou go wasted to the tomb,
To fatten with thy spoils thou know'st not whom?

ON FEMALE INCONSTANCY.

Rich, thou hadst many lovers—poor, hast none,
So surely want extinguishes the flame,
And she who called thee once her pretty one,
And her Adonis, now inquires thy name.

Where wast thou born, Sosicrates, and where,
In what strange country can thy parents live,
Who seem'st, by thy complaints, not yet aware
That want's a crime no woman can forgive?

ON THE GRASSHOPPER.

Happy songster, perched above,
On the summit of the grove,
Whom a dewdrop cheers to sing
With the freedom of a king.
From thy perch survey the fields
Where prolific nature yields
Nought that, willingly as she,
Man surrenders not to thee.
For hostility or hate
None thy pleasures can create.
Thee it satisfies to sing
Sweetly the return of spring,
Herald of the genial hours,
Harming neither herbs nor flowers.
Therefore man thy voice attends
Gladly—thou and he are friends;
Nor thy never ceasing strains
Phœbus or the Muse disdains
As too simple or too long,
For themselves inspire the song.
Earth-born, bloodless, undecaying,
Ever singing, sporting, playing,
What has nature else to show
Godlike in its kind as thou?

ON HERMOCRATIA.

Hermocratia named—save only one—
Twice fifteen births I bore, and buried none;
For neither Phœbus pierced my thriving joys,
Nor Dian—she my girls, or he my boys.
But Dian rather, when my daughters lay
In parturition, chased their pangs away.

And all my sons, by Phœbus' bounty, shared
A vigorous youth, by sickness unimpaired.
O Niobe! far less prolific! see
Thy boast against Latona shamed by me!

WHAT WEALTH CANNOT BUY.

FROM MENANDER.*

Fond youth! who dream'st that hoarded gold
Is needful, not alone to pay
For all thy various items sold,
To serve the wants of every day;

Bread, vinegar, and oil, and meat,
For savoury viands seasoned high;
But somewhat more important yet—
I tell thee what it cannot buy.

No treasure, hadst thou more amassed
Than fame to Tantalus assigned,
Would save thee from a tomb at last,
But thou must leave it all behind.

I give thee, therefore, counsel wise;
Confide not vainly in thy store,
However large—much less despise
Others comparatively poor;

But in thy more exalted state
A just and equal temper show,
That all who see thee rich and great
May deem thee worthy to be so.

ON PALLAS BATHING,

FROM A HYMN OF CALLIMACHUS.

Nor oils of balmy scent produce,
Nor mirror for Minerva's use,
Ye nymphs who lave her; she, arrayed
In genuine beauty, scorns their aid.
Not even when they left the skies
To seek on Ida's head the prize
From Paris' hand, did Juno deign,
Or Pallas in the crystal plain

* A Greek poet who lived B.C. 342.

Of Simois' stream her locks to trace,
Or in the mirror's polished face,
Though Venus oft with anxious care
Adjusted twice a single hair.

ON A FLATTERING MIRROR, TO DEMOSTHENES.

It flatters and deceives thy view,
 This mirror of ill-polished ore;
For were it just, and told thee true,
 Thou wouldst consult it never more.

ON A SIMILAR CHARACTER.

You give your cheeks a rosy stain,
 With washes dye your hair;
But paint and washes both are vain
 To give a youthful air.

Those wrinkles mock your daily toil,
 No labour will efface'em,
You wear a mask of smoothest oil,
 Yet still with ease we trace'em.

An art so fruitless then forsake,
 Which though you much excel in,
You never can contrive to make
 Old Hecuba young Helen.

ON AN UGLY FELLOW.

Beware, my friend! of crystal brook,
Or fountain, lest that hideous hook,
 Thy nose, thou chance to see;
Narcissus' fate would then be thine,
And self-detested thou wouldst pine,
 As self-enamoured he.

ON A BATTERED BEAUTY.

Hair, wax, rouge, honey, teeth you buy,
 A multifarious store!
A mask at once would all supply,
 Nor would it cost you more.

ON A THIEF.

When Aulus, the nocturnal thief, made prize
Of Hermes, swift-winged envoy of the skies,
Hermes, Arcadia's king, the thief divine,
Who when an infant stole Apollo's kine,
And whom, as arbiter and overseer
Of our gymnastic sports, we planted here;
"Hermes," he cried, "you meet no new disaster;
Ofttimes the pupil goes beyond his master."

ON PEDIGREE, FROM EPICHARMUS.*

My mother! if thou love me, name no more
My noble birth! Sounding at every breath
My noble birth, thou kill'st me. Thither fly,
As to their only refuge, all from whom
Nature withholds all good besides; they boast
Their noble birth, conduct us to the tombs
Of their forefathers, and, from age to age
Ascending, trumpet their illustrious race:
But whom hast thou beheld, or canst thou name
Derived from no forefathers? Such a man
Lives not; for how could such be born at all?
And if it chance that, native of a land
Far distant, or in infancy deprived
Of all his kindred, one, who cannot trace
His origin, exist, why deem him sprung
From baser ancestry than theirs who can?
My mother! he whom nature at his birth
Endowed with virtuous qualities, although
An Æthiop and a slave, is nobly born.

ON ENVY.

Pity, says the Theban bard,†
From my wishes I discard;
Envy, let me rather be,
Rather far, a theme for thee!
Pity to distress is shown,
Envy to the great alone—
So the Theban—But to shine
Less conspicuous be mine!

* The first Greek comic writer; he lived B.C. 480.

† Pindar.

I prefer the golden mean,
Pomp and penury between;
For alarm and peril wait
Ever on the loftiest state,
And the lowest to the end
Obloquy and scorn attend.

ON IMMODERATE GRIEF, BY PHILEMON.*

Oft we enhance our ills by discontent,
And give them bulk beyond what nature meant.
A parent, brother, friend deceased, to cry—
"He's dead indeed, but he was born to die"—
Such temperate grief is suited to the size
And burthen of the loss; is just and wise.
But to exclaim, "Ah! wherefore was I born,
Thus to be left for ever thus forlorn?"
Who thus laments his loss invites distress,
And magnifies a woe that might be less,
Through dull despondence to his lot resigned,
And leaving reason's remedy behind.

ON THE TEACHING OF CUPID, BY MOSCHUS.†

I slept when Venus entered: to my bed
A Cupid in her beauteous hand she led,
A bashful seeming boy, and thus she said:
"Shepherd, receive my little one! I bring
An untaught love, whom thou must teach to sing."
She said, and left him. I, suspecting nought,
Many a sweet strain my subtle pupil taught,
How reed to reed Pan first with osier bound,
How Pallas formed the pipe of softest sound,
How Hermes gave the lute, and how the quire
Of Phœbus owe to Phœbus' self the lyre.
Such were my themes; my themes nought heeded he,
But ditties sang of amorous sort to me,
The pangs that mortals and immortals prove
From Venus' influence, and the darts of love.
Thus was the teacher by the pupil taught;
His lessons I retained, and mine forgot.

* An Athenian comic poet who lived B.C. 330.
† A pastoral poet of Sicily.

THE FIFTH SATIRE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF HORACE.

A HUMOROUS DESCRIPTION OF THE AUTHOR'S JOURNEY FROM ROME TO BRUNDUSIUM.

'Twas a long journey lay before us,
When I and honest Heliodorus,
(Who far in point of rhetoric
Surpasses every living Greek,)
Each leaving our respective home
Together sallied forth from Rome.
First at Aricia we alight,
And there refresh and pass the night,
Our entertainment rather coarse
Than sumptuous, but I've met with worse.
Thence o'er the causeway soft and fair
To Appii-forum we repair.
But as this road is well supplied
(Temptation strong!) on either side
With inns commodious, snug, and warm,
We split the journey, and perform
In two days' time what's often done
By brisker travellers in one.
Here rather choosing not to sup
Than with bad water mix my cup,
After a warm debate in spite
Of a provoking appetite,
I sturdily resolved at last
To balk it, and pronounce a fast,
And in a moody humour wait,
While my less dainty comrades bait.
Now o'er the spangled hemisphere
Diffused the starry train appear,
When there arose a desperate brawl;
The slaves and bargemen, one and all,
Rending their throats (have mercy on us!)
As if they were resolved to stun us.
"Steer the barge this way to the shore!
I tell you we'll admit no more!
Plague! will you never be content?"
Thus a whole hour at least is spent,
While they receive the several fares,
And kick the mule into his gears.
Happy, these difficulties past,
Could we have fallen asleep at last!
But, what with humming, croaking, biting,
Gnats, frogs, and all their plagues uniting,

These tuneful natives of the lake
Conspired to keep us broad awake.
Besides, to make the concert full,
Two maudlin wights, exceeding dull,
The bargeman and a passenger,
Each in his turn, essayed an air
In honour of his absent fair.
At length the passenger, oppress'd
With wine, left off, and snored the rest.
The weary bargeman too gave o'er,
And hearing his companion snore,
Seized the occasion, fix'd the barge,
Turn'd out his mule to graze at large,
And slept forgetful of his charge.
And now the sun o'er eastern hill,
Discover'd that our barge stood still;
When one, whose anger vex'd him sore,
With malice fraught, leaps quick on shore,
Plucks up a stake, with many a thwack
Assails the mule and driver's back.
  Then slowly moving on with pain,
At ten Feronia's stream we gain,
And in her pure and glassy wave
Our hands and faces gladly lave.
Climbing three miles, fair Anxur's height
We reach, with stony quarries white.
While here, as was agreed, we wait,
Till, charged with business of the state,
Mæcenas and Cocceius come,
The messengers of peace from Rome.
My eyes, by watery humours blear
And sore, I with black balsam smear.
At length they join us, and with them
Our worthy friend Fonteius came;
A man of such complete desert,
Antony loved him at his heart.
At Fundi we refused to bait,
And laugh'd at vain Aufidius' state,
A prætor now, a scribe before,
The purple-border'd robe he wore,
His slave the smoking censer bore.
Tired at Muræna's we repose,
At Formia sup at Capito's.
  With smiles the rising morn we greet,
At Sinuessa pleased to meet
With Plotius, Varius, and the bard
Whom Mantua first with wonder heard.
The world no purer spirits knows;

For none my heart more warmly glows.
Oh! what embraces we bestow'd,
And with what joy our breasts o'erflow'd!
Sure while my sense is sound and clear,
Long as I live, I shall prefer
A gay, good-natured, easy friend,
To every blessing Heaven can send.
At a small village, the next night,
Near the Volturnus we alight;
Where, as employ'd on state affairs,
We were supplied by the purveyors
Frankly at once, and without hire,
With food for man and horse, and fire.
Capua next day betimes we reach,
Where Virgil and myself, who each
Labour'd with different maladies,
His such a stomach,—mine such eyes,—
As would not bear strong exercise,
In drowsy mood to sleep resort;
Mæcenas to the tennis-court.
Next at Cocceius's farm we're treated,
Above the Caudian tavern seated;
His kind and hospitable board
With choice of wholesome food was stored.
Now, O ye Nine, inspire my lays!
To nobler themes my fancy raise!
Two combatants, who scorn to yield
The noisy, tongue-disputed field,
Sarmentus and Cicirrus, claim
A poet's tribute to their fame;
Cicirrus of true Oscian breed,
Sarmentus, who was never freed,
But ran away. We won't defame him;
His lady lives, and still may claim him.
Thus dignified, in harder fray
These champions their keen wit display,
And first Sarmentus led the way.
"Thy locks," quoth he, "so rough and coarse,
Look like the mane of some wild horse."
We laugh: Cicirrus undismay'd—
"Have at you!"—cries, and shakes his head.
"'Tis well," Sarmentus says, "you've lost
That horn your forehead once could boast;
Since maim'd and mangled as you are,
You seem to butt." A hideous scar
Improved ('tis true) with double grace
The native horrors of his face.
Well. After much jocosely said

Of his grim front, so fiery red,
(For carbuncles had blotch'd it o'er,
As usual on Campania's shore,)
"Give us," he cried, "since you're so big,
A sample of the Cyclops jig!
Your shanks, methinks, no buskins ask,
Nor does your phiz require a mask."
To this Cicirrus: "In return
Of you, sir, now I fain would learn,
When 'twas, no longer deem'd a slave,
Your chains you to the Lares gave.
For though a scrivener's right you claim,
Your lady's title is the same.
But what could make you run away,
Since, pigmy as you are, each day
A single pound of bread would quite
O'erpower your puny appetite?"
Thus joked the champions, while we laugh'd,
And many a cheerful bumper quaff'd.
To Beneventum next we steer;
Where our good host, by over care
In roasting thrushes lean as mice,
Had almost fallen a sacrifice.
The kitchen soon was all on fire,
And to the roof the flames aspire.
There might you see each man and master
Striving, amidst this sad disaster,
To save the supper. Then they came
With speed enough to quench the flame.
From hence we first at distance see
The Apulian hills, well known to me,
Parch'd by the sultry western blast;
And which we never should have pass'd,
Had not Trivicus by the way
Received us at the close of day.
But each was forced at entering here
To pay the tribute of a tear,
For more of smoke than fire was seen,
The hearth was piled with logs so green.
From hence in chaises we were carried
Miles twenty-four, and gladly tarried
At a small town, whose name my verse
(So barbarous is it) can't rehearse.
Know it you may by many a sign,
Water is dearer far than wine.
There bread is deem'd such dainty fare,
That every prudent traveller
His wallet loads with many a crust;

For at Canusium, you might just
As well attempt to gnaw a stone
As think to get a morsel down.
That too with scanty streams is fed;
Its founder was brave Diomed.
Good Varius (ah, that friends must part!)
Here left us all with aching heart.
At Rubi we arrived that day,
Well jaded by the length of way,
And sure poor mortals ne'er were wetter.
Next day no weather could be better;
No roads so bad; we scarce could crawl
Along to fishy Barium's wall.
The Egnatians next, who by the rules
Of common sense are knaves or fools,
Made all our sides with laughter heave,
Since we with them must needs believe,
That incense in their temples burns,
And without fire to ashes turns.
To circumcision's bigots tell
Such tales! for me, I know full well,
That in high heaven, unmoved by care,
The gods eternal quiet share:
Nor can I deem their spleen the cause
Why fickle Nature breaks her laws.
Brundusium last we reach; and there
Stop short the muse and traveller.

THE NINTH SATIRE OF THE FIRST BOOK OF HORACE.

THE DESCRIPTION OF AN IMPERTINENT.

ADAPTED TO THE PRESENT TIMES.

1759.

Sauntering along the street one day,
On trifles musing by the way,
Up steps a free familiar wight;
(I scarcely knew the man by sight.)
"Carlos," he cried, "your hand, my dear;
Gad, I rejoice to meet you here!
Pray Heaven I see you well!" "So, so;
Even well enough, as times now go.
The same good wishes, sir, to you."

Finding he still pursued me close,
"Sir, you have business, I suppose?"
"My business, sir, is quickly done,
'Tis but to make my merit known.
Sir, I have read"—"O learned sir,
You and your learning I revere."
Then, sweating with anxiety,
And sadly longing to get free,
Gods, how I scamper'd, scuffled for't,
Ran, halted, ran again, stopp'd short,
Beckon'd my boy, and pull'd him near,
And whisper'd nothing in his ear.
Teased with his loose unjointed chat,
"What street is this? What house is that?"
O Harlow, how I envied thee
Thy unabash'd effrontery,
Who dar'st a foe with freedom blame,
And call a coxcomb by his name!
When I return'd him answer none,
Obligingly the fool ran on,
"I see you're dismally distress'd,
Would give the world to be released,
But, by your leave, sir, I shall still
Stick to your skirts, do what you will.
Pray which way does your journey tend?"
"Oh 'tis a tedious way, my friend,
Across the Thames, the Lord knows where:
I would not trouble you so far."
"Well, I'm at leisure to attend you."
"Are you?" thought I, "the De'il befriend you!"
No ass with double panniers rack'd,
Oppress'd, o'erladen, broken-back'd,
E'er look'd a thousandth part so dull
As I, nor half so like a fool.
"Sir, I know little of myself,"
Proceeds the pert conceited elf,
"If Gray or Mason you will deem
Than me more worthy your esteem.
Poems I write by folios,
As fast as other men write prose.
Then I can sing so loud, so clear,
That Beard* cannot with me compare.
In dancing, too, I all surpass,
Not Cooke can move with such a grace."

* John Beard. He married a daughter of Rich, and succeeded him in the management of Covent Garden in 1761.

Here I made shift, with much ado,
To interpose a word or two.
" Have you no parents, sir, no friends,
Whose welfare on your own depends?"
" Parents, relations, say you? No.
They're all disposed of long ago."
" Happy to be no more perplex'd!
My fate too threatens, I go next.
Dispatch me, sir, 'tis now too late,
Alas! to struggle with my fate!
Well, I'm convinced my time is come.
When young, a gipsy told my doom;
The beldame shook her palsied head,
As she perused my palm, and said,
'Of poison, pestilence, or war,
Gout, stone, defluxion, or catarrh,
You have no reason to beware.
Beware the coxcomb's idle prate;
Chiefly, my son, beware of that;
Be sure, when you behold him, fly
Out of all earshot, or you die!' "
 To Rufus' Hall we now draw near
Where he was summon'd to appear,
Refute the charge the plaintiff brought,
Or suffer judgment by default.
" For Heaven's sake, if you love me, wait
One moment! I'll be with you straight."
Glad of a plausible pretence—
" Sir, I must beg you to dispense
With my attendance in the court.
My legs will surely suffer for't."
" Nay, prithee, Carlos, stop a while!"
" Faith, sir, in law I have no skill.
Besides, I have no time to spare,
I must be going, you know where."
" Well, I protest, I'm doubtful now,
Whether to leave my suit or you!"
" Me, without scruple!" I reply,
" Me, by all means, sir!"—" No, not I.
Allons, Monsieur!" 'Twere vain (you know)
To strive with a victorious foe.
So I reluctantly obey,
And follow, where he leads the way.
 " You and Newcastle are so close;
Still hand and glove, sir, I suppose?"
" Newcastle (let me tell you, sir),
Has not his equal anywhere."
" Well. There indeed your fortune's made!

Faith, sir, you understand your trade.
Would you but give me your good word!
Just introduce me to my lord.
I should serve charmingly by way
Of second fiddle, as they say:
What think you, sir? 'twere a good jest.
'Slife, we should quickly scout the rest."
"Sir, you mistake the matter far,
We have no second fiddles there."
"Richer than I some folks may be:
More learnèd, but it hurts not me.
Friends though he has of different kind,
Each has his proper place assign'd."
"Strange matters these alleged by you!"
"Strange they may be, but they are true."
"Well, then, I vow, 'tis mighty clever,
Now I long ten times more than ever
To be advanced extremely near
One of his shining character.
Have but the will—there wants no more,
'Tis plain enough you have the power.
His easy temper (that's the worst)
He knows, and is so shy at first.
But such a cavalier as you—
Lord, sir, you'll quickly bring him to!
Well; if I fail in my design,
Sir, it shall be no fault of mine.
If by the saucy servile tribe
Denied, what think you of a bribe?
Shut out to-day, not die with sorrow,
But try my luck again to-morrow.
Never attempt to visit him
But at the most convenient time,
Attend him on each levee day,
And there my humble duty pay.
Labour, like this, our want supplies;
And they must stoop, who mean to rise."
  While thus he wittingly harangued,
For which you'll guess I wish'd him hang'd,
Campley, a friend of mine, came by,
Who knew his humour more than I.
We stop, salute, and—"Why so fast,
Friend Carlos? whither all this haste?"
Fired at the thoughts of a reprieve,
I pinch him, pull him, twitch his sleeve,
Nod, beckon, bite my lips, wink, pout,
Do everything but speak plain out:
While he, sad dog, from the beginning,

Determined to mistake my meaning,
Instead of pitying my curse,
By jeering made it ten times worse.
"Campley, what secret (pray!) was that
You wanted to communicate!"
"I recollect. But 'tis no matter.
Carlos, we'll talk of that hereafter.
E'en let the secret rest. 'Twill tell
Another time, sir, just as well."
Was ever such a dismal day?
Unlucky cur, he steals away,
And leaves me, half bereft of life,
At mercy of the butcher's knife;
When sudden, shouting from afar,
See his antagonist appear!
The bailiff seized him quick as thought.
"Ho, Mr. Scoundrel! are you caught?
Sir, you are witness to the arrest."
"Ay, marry sir, I'll do my best."
The mob huzzas. Away they trudge,
Culprit and all, before the judge.
Meanwhile, I, luckily enough,
(Thanks to Apollo), got clear off.

TRANSLATIONS FROM HORACE.

LIB. I. ODE IX.

Vides, ut altâ stet nive candidum
Soracte; . . . . .

SEEST thou yon mountain laden with deep snow?
The groves beneath their fleecy burthen bow,
The streams, congealed, forget to flow.
Come, thaw the cold, and lay a cheerful pile
Of fuel on the hearth;
Broach the best cask, and make old Winter smile
With seasonable mirth.

This be our part—let Heaven dispose the rest;
If Jove command, the winds shall sleep,
That now wage war upon the foamy deep,
And gentle gales spring from the balmy west.

E'en let us shift to-morrow as we may,
When to-morrow's passed away,

We at least shall have to say,
We have lived another day;
Your auburn locks will soon be silvered o'er,
Old age is at our heels, and youth returns no more

LIB. I. ODE XXXVIII.

Persicos odi, puer, apparatus.

Boy, I hate their empty shows,
Persian garlands I detest,
Bring not me the late-blown rose,
Lingering after all the rest.
Plainer myrtle pleases me,
Thus outstretched beneath my vine;
Myrtle more becoming thee,
Waiting with thy master's wine.

ANOTHER TRANSLATION OF THE SAME ODE.*

Boy! I detest all Persian fopperies,
Fillet-bound garlands are to me disgusting;
Task not thyself with any search, I charge thee,
Where latest roses linger,
Bring me alone (for thou wilt find that readily)
Plain myrtle. Myrtle neither will disparage
Thee occupied to serve me, or me drinking
Beneath my vine's cool shelter.

LIB. II. ODE XVI.

Otium Divos rogat in patenti.

Ease is the weary merchant's prayer,
Who ploughs by night the Ægean flood,
When neither moon nor stars appear,
Or faintly glimmer through the cloud.

For ease the Mede with quiver graced,
For ease the Thracian hero sighs,
Delightful ease all pant to taste,
A blessing which no treasure buys.

* Dr. John Johnson remarks upon this second translation, "English Sapphics have been attempted, but with little success, because in our language we have no certain rules to determine the quantity. The following version was made merely in the way of experiment how far it might be possible to imitate a Latin Sapphic in English without any attention to that circumstance." Poems, 1815, vol. iii. 8vo, p. 127; 12mo, p. 91.

For neither gold can lull to rest,
 Nor all a Consul's guard beat off
The tumults of a troubled breast,
 The cares that haunt a gilded roof.

Happy the man whose table shows
 A few clean ounces of old plate,
No fear intrudes on his repose,
 No sordid wishes to be great.

Poor short lived things, what plans we lay!
 Ah, why forsake our native home!
To distant climates speed away;
 For self sticks close where'er we roam.

Care follows hard, and soon o'ertakes
 The well rigged ship, the warlike steed,
Her destined quarry ne'er forsakes,
 Not the wind flies with half her speed.

From anxious fears of future ill
 Guard well the cheerful, happy Now;
Gild e'en your sorrows with a smile,
 No blessing is unmixed below.

Thy neighing steeds and lowing herds,
 Thy numerous flocks around thee graze,
And the best purple Tyre affords
 Thy robe magnificent displays.

On me indulgent Heaven bestowed
 A rural mansion, neat and small;
This lyre;—and as for yonder crowd,
 The happiness to hate them all.

TRANSLATIONS FROM VIRGIL.

ÆNEID, BOOK VIII. LINE 18.

Thus Italy was moved—nor did the chief
Æneas in his mind less tumult feel.
On every side his anxious thought he turns,
Restless, unfixed, not knowing what to choose.
And as a cistern that in brim of brass
Confines the crystal flood, if chance the sun
Smite on it, or the moon's resplendent orb,
The quivering light now flashes on the walls,

Now leaps uncertain to the vaulted roof:
Such were the wavering motions of his mind.
'Twas night—and weary nature sunk to rest.
The birds, the bleating flocks, were heard no more.
At length, on the cold ground, beneath the damp
And dewy vault, fast by the river's brink,
The father of his country sought repose.
When lo! among the spreading poplar boughs,
Forth from his pleasant stream, propitious rose
The god of Tiber: clear transparent gauze
Infolds his loins, his brows with reeds are crowned:
And these his gracious words to soothe his care:
"Heaven-born,* who bring'st our kindred home again,
Rescued, and giv'st eternity to Troy,
Long have Laurentum and the Latian plains
Expected thee; behold thy fixed abode.
Fear not the threats of war, the storm is passed,
The gods appeased. For proof that what thou hearest
Is no vain forgery or delusive dream,
Beneath the grove that borders my green bank,
A milk-white swine, with thirty milk-white young,
Shall greet thy wondering eyes. Mark well the place;
For 'tis thy place of rest, there end thy toils:
There, twice ten years elapsed, fair Alba's walls
Shall rise, fair Alba, by Ascanius' hand.
Thus shall it be—now listen, while I teach
The means to accomplish these events at hand.
The Arcadians here, a race from Pallas† sprung,
Following Evander's standard and his fate,
High on these mountains, a well chosen spot,
Have built a city; for their grandsire's sake
Named Pallanteum. These perpetual war
Wage with the Latians: joined in faithful league
And arms confederate, add them to your camp.
Myself between my winding banks will speed
Your well oared barks to stem the opposing tide.
Rise, goddess-born, arise; and with the first
Declining stars seek Juno in thy prayer,
And vanquish all her wrath with suppliant vows.
When conquest crowns thee, then remember me.
I am the Tiber, whose cærulean stream
Heaven favours; I with copious flood divide
These grassy banks, and cleave the fruitful meads.
My mansion, this—and lofty cities crown

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* Æneas was the son of Venus and Anchises.

† Pallas, King of Arcadia, was the great-grandfather of Evander, who migrated to Italy about sixty years before the Trojan war.

My fountain head."—He spoke and sought the deep,
And plunged his form beneath the closing flood.
Æneas at the morning dawn awoke,
And, rising, with uplifted eye beheld
The orient sun, then dipped his palms, and scooped
The brimming stream,* and thus addressed the skies:
"Ye nymphs, Laurentian nymphs, who feed the source
Of many a stream, and thou, with thy blest flood,
O Tiber! hear, accept me, and afford,
At length afford, a shelter from my woes.
Where'er in secret cavern under ground
Thy waters sleep, where'er they spring to light,
Since thou hast pity for a wretch like me,
My offerings and my vows shall wait thee still:
Great horned Father of Hesperian floods,
Be gracious now, and ratify thy word."
He said, and chose two galleys from his fleet,
Fits them with oars, and clothes the crew in arms.
When lo! astonishing and pleasing sight,
The milk-white dam, with her unspotted brood,
Lay stretched upon the bank, beneath the grove.
To thee, the pious Prince, Juno, to thee
Devotes them all, all on thine altar bleed.
That livelong night old Tiber smoothed his flood,
And so restrained it that it seemed to stand
Motionless as a pool, or silent lake,
That not a billow might resist their oars.
With cheerful sound of exhortation soon
Their voyage they begin; the pitchy keel
Slides through the gentle deep, the quiet stream
Admires the unwonted burthen that it bears,
Well polished arms, and vessels painted gay.
Beneath the shade of various trees, between
The umbrageous branches of the spreading groves,
They cut their liquid way, nor day nor night
They slack their course, unwinding as they go
The long meanders of the peaceful tide.
  The glowing sun was in meridian height,
When from afar they saw the humble walls,
And the few scattered cottages, which now
The Roman power has equalled with the clouds;
But such was then Evander's scant domain.
They steer to shore, and hasten to the town.
  It chanced the Arcadian monarch on that day,
Before the walls, beneath a shady grove,

* Threw it down as a libation.

Was celebrating high, in solemn feast,
Alcides and his tutelary gods.
Pallas, his son, was there, and there the chief
Of all his youth; with these, a worthy tribe,
His poor but venerable senate, burnt
Sweet incense, and their altars smoked with blood.
Soon as they saw the towering masts approach,
Sliding between the trees, while the crew rest
Upon the silent oars, amazed they rose,
Not without fear, and all forsook the feast.
But Pallas undismayed, his javelin seized,
Rushed to the bank, and from a rising ground
Forbade them to disturb the sacred rites.
"Ye stranger youth! What prompts you to explore
This untried way? and whither do ye steer?
Whence, and who are ye? Bring ye peace or war?"
Æneas from his lofty deck holds forth
The peaceful olive branch, and thus replies:
"Trojans and enemies to the Latian state,
Whom they with unprovoked hostilities
Have driven away, thou seest. We seek Evander—
Say this—and say beside, the Trojan chiefs
Are come, and seek his friendship and his aid."
Pallas with wonder heard that awful name,
And, "Whosoe'er thou art," he cried, "come forth;
Bear thine own tidings to my father's ear,
And be a welcome guest beneath our roof."
He said, and pressed the stranger to his breast:
Then led him from the river to the grove,
Where courteous, thus Æneas greets the king:
"Best of the Grecian race, to whom I bow
(So wills my fortune) suppliant, and stretch forth
In sign of amity this peaceful branch,
I feared thee not, although I knew thee well
A Grecian leader, born in Arcady,
And kinsman of the Atridæ.* Me my virtue,
That means no wrong to thee, the Oracles,
Our kindred families allied of old,
And thy renown diffused through every land,
Have all conspired to bind in friendship to thee,
And send me not unwilling to thy shores.
Dardanus, author of the Trojan state,
(So say the Greeks) was fair Electra's son;
Electra boasted Atlas for her sire,
Whose shoulders high sustain the æthereal orbs.

* The sons of Atreus—Agamemnon and Menelaus.

Your sire is Mercury, whom Maia bore,
Sweet Maia, on Cyllene's hoary top.
Her, if we credit aught tradition old,
Atlas of yore, the selfsame Atlas, claimed
His daughter. Thus united close in blood,
Thy race and ours one common sire confess.
With these credentials fraught, I would not send
Ambassadors with artful phrase to sound
And win thee by degrees—but came myself—
Me, therefore, me thou seest; my life the stake:
'Tis I, Æneas, who implore thine aid.
Should Daunia* that now aims the blow at thee,
Prevail to conquer us, nought then, they think,
Will hinder but Hesperia must be theirs,
All theirs, from the upper to the nether sea.
Take then our friendship, and return us thine.
We too have courage, we have noble minds,
And youth well tried, and exercised in arms."
Thus spoke Æneas;—He with fixed regard
Surveyed him speaking, features, form, and mien.
Then briefly thus—"Thou noblest of thy name,
How gladly do I take thee to my heart,
How gladly thus confess thee for a friend!
In thee I trace Anchises; his thy speech,
Thy voice, thy countenance. For I well remember
Many a day since, when Priam journeyed forth
To Salamis, to see the land where dwelt
Hesione, his sister, he pushed on
Even to Arcadia's frozen bounds. 'Twas then
The bloom of youth was glowing on my cheek;
Much I admired the Trojan chiefs, and much
Their king, the son of great Laomedon,
But most Anchises, towering o'er them all.
A youthful longing seized me to accost
The hero, and embrace him; I drew near,
And gladly led him to the walls of Pheneus.
Departing, he distinguished me with gifts,
A costly quiver stored with Lycian darts,
A robe inwove with gold, with gold embossed,
Two bridles, those which Pallas uses now.
The friendly league thou hast solicited
I give thee, therefore, and to-morrow all
My chosen youth shall wait on your return.
Meanwhile, since thus in friendship ye are come,
Rejoice with us, and join to celebrate

* Part of Apulia.

These annual rites, which may not be delayed,
And be at once familiar at our board."
He said, and bade replace the feast removed;
Himself upon a grassy bank disposed
The crew; but for Æneas ordered forth
A couch spread with a lion's tawny shag,
And bade him share the honours of his throne.
The appointed youth with glad alacrity
Assist the labouring priest to load the board
With roasted entrails of the slaughtered beeves,
Well kneaded bread, and mantling bowls. Well pleased,
Æneas and the Trojan youth regale
On the huge length of a well pastured chine.
Hunger appeased, and tables all despatched,
Thus spake Evander: "Superstition here,
In this old solemn feasting has no part.
No, Trojan friend, from utmost danger saved,
In gratitude this worship we renew.
Behold that rock which nods above the vale,
Those bulks of broken stone dispersed around,
How desolate the shattered cave appears,
And what a ruin spreads the encumbered plain.
Within this pile, but far within, was once
The den of Cacus; dire his hateful form
That shunned the day, half monster and half man.
Blood newly shed streamed ever on the ground
Smoking, and many a visage pale and wan
Nailed at his gate, hung hideous to the sight.
Vulcan begot the brute: vast was his size,
And from his throat he belched his father's fires.
But the day came that brought us what we wished,
The assistance and the presence of a God.
Flushed with his victory, and the spoils he won
From triple-formed Geryon lately slain,
The great avenger, Hercules, appeared.
Hither he drove his stately bulls, and poured
His herds along the vale. But the sly thief
Cacus, that nothing might escape his hand
Of villany or fraud, drove from the stalls
Four of the lordliest of his bulls, and four
The fairest of his heifers; by the tail
He dragged them to his den, that, there concealed,
No footsteps might betray the dark abode.
And now his herd, with provender sufficed,
Alcides would be gone: they as they went
Still bellowing loud, made the deep echoing woods
And distant hills resound: when hark! one ox,
Imprisoned close within the vast recess,

Lows in return, and frustrates all his hope.
Then fury seized Alcides, and his breast
With indignation heaved: grasping his club
Of knotted oak, swift to the mountain top
He ran, he flew. Then first was Cacus seen
To tremble, and his eyes bespoke his fears.
Swift as an eastern blast he sought his den,
And dread increasing, winged him as he went.
Drawn up in iron slings above the gate,
A rock was hung enormous. Such his haste,
He burst the chains and dropped it at the door,
Then grappled it with iron work within
Of bolts and bars by Vulcan's art contrived.
Scarce was he fast, when panting for revenge
Came Hercules; he gnashed his teeth with rage,
And quick as lightning glanced his eyes around
In quest of entrance. Fiery red and stung
With indignation, thrice he wheeled his course
About the mountain; thrice, but thrice in vain,
He strove to force the quarry at the gate,
And thrice sat down o'erwearied in the vale.
There stood a pointed rock, abrupt and rude,
That high o'erlooked the rest, close at the back
Of the fell monster's den, where birds obscene
Of ominous note resorted, choughs and daws.
This, as it leaned obliquely to the left,
Threatening the stream below, he from the right
Pushed with his utmost strength, and to and fro
He shook the mass, loosening its lowest base;
Then shoved it from its seat; down fell the pile;
Sky thundered at the fall; the banks give way,
The affrighted stream flows upward to his source.
Behold the kennel of the brute exposed,
The gloomy vault laid open. So, if chance
Earth yawning to the centre should disclose
The mansions, the pale mansions of the dead,
Loathed by the gods, such would the gulf appear,
And the ghosts tremble at the sight of day.
The monster braying with unusual din
Within his hollow lair, and sore amazed
To see such sudden inroads of the light,
Alcides pressed him close with what at hand
Lay readiest, stumps of trees, and fragments huge
Of millstone size. He, (for escape was none)
Wondrous to tell! forth from his gorge discharged
A smoky cloud that darkened all the den;
Wreath after wreath he vomited amain,
The smothering vapour mixed with fiery sparks.

No sight could penetrate the veil obscure.
The hero, more provoked, endured not this,
But with a headlong leap he rushed to where
The thickest cloud enveloped his abode.
There grasped he Cacus, spite of all his fires,
Till crushed within his arms, the monster shows
His bloodless throat, now dry with panting hard,
And his pressed eyeballs start. Soon he tears down
The barricade of rock, the dark abyss
Lies open; and the imprisoned bulls, the theft
He had with oaths denied, are brought to light;
By the heels the miscreant carcass is dragged forth,
His face, his eyes, all terrible, his breast
Beset with bristles, and his sooty jaws
Are viewed with wonder never to be cloyed.
Hence the celebrity thou seest, and hence
This festal day. Potitius first enjoined
Posterity these solemn rites; he first
With those who bear the great Pinarian name
To Hercules devoted, in the grove
This altar built, deemed sacred in the highest
By us, and sacred ever to be deemed.
Come then, my friends, and bind your youthful brows
In praise of such deliverance, and hold forth
The brimming cup; your deities and ours
Are now the same, then drink, and freely too."
So saying, he twisted round his reverend locks
A variegated poplar wreath, and filled
His right hand with a consecrated bowl.
At once all pour libations on the board,
All offer prayer. And now the radiant sphere
Of day descending, eventide drew near,
When first Potitius with the priests advanced,
Begirt with skins, and torches in their hands.
High piled with meats of savoury taste, they ranged
The chargers, and renewed the grateful feast.
Then came the Salii, crowned with poplar too,
Circling the blazing altars; here the youth
Advanced, a choir harmonious, there were heard
The reverend seers responsive; praise they sung,
Much praise in honour of Alcides' deeds;
How first with infant gripe two serpents huge
He strangled, sent from Juno; next they sung,
How Troja and Œchalia he destroyed,
Fair cities both, and many a toilsome task
Beneath Eurystheus (so his stepdame willed)
Achieved victorious. "Thou, the cloud-born pair,
Hylæus fierce and Pholus, monstrous twins,

Thou slew'st the Minotaur, the plague of Crete,
And the vast lion of the Nemean rock,
Thee Hell, and Cerberus, hell's porter, feared,
Stretched in his den upon his half gnawed bones.
Thee no abhorred form, not even the vast
Typhœus could appal, though clad in arms.
Hail, true born son of Jove, among the gods
At length enrolled, nor least illustrious thou,
Haste thee propitious, and approve our songs :"—
Thus hymned the chorus ; above all they sing
The cave of Cacus, and the flames he breathed.
The whole grove echoes, and the hills rebound.
  The rites performed, all hasten to the town.
The king, bending with age, held as he went
Æneas, and his Pallas by the hand,
With much variety of pleasing talk
Shortening the way. Æneas, with a smile,
Looks round him, charmed with the delightful scene,
And many a question asks, and much he learns
Of heroes far renowned in ancient times.
Then spake Evander. "These extensive groves
Were once inhabited by fawns and nymphs
Produced beneath their shades, and a rude race
Of men, the progeny uncouth of elms
And knotted oaks. They no refinement knew
Of laws or manners civilized, to yoke
The steer, with forecast provident to store
The hoarded grain, or manage what they had,
But browsed like beasts upon the leafy boughs,
Or fed voracious on their hunted prey.
An exile from Olympus, and expelled
His native realm by thunder-bearing Jove,
First Saturn came. He from the mountains drew
This herd of men untractable and fierce,
And gave them laws : and called his hiding place,
This growth of forests, Latium. Such the peace
His land possessed, the golden age was then,
So famed in story ; till by slow degrees
Far other times, and of far different hue,
Succeeded, thirst of gold and thirst of blood.
Then came Ausonian bands, and armed hosts
From Sicily, and Latium often changed
Her master and her name. At length arose
Kings, of whom Tybris of gigantic form
Was chief ; and we Italians since have called
The river by his name ; thus Albula
(So was the country called in ancient days)
Was quite forgot. Me from my native land

An exile, through the dangerous ocean driven,
Resistless fortune and relentless fate,
Placed where thou seest me. Phœbus, and
The nymph Carmentis, with maternal care
Attendant on my wanderings, fixed me here."

[Ten lines omitted.]

He said, and showed him the Tarpeian rock,
And the rude spot where now the capitol
Stands all magnificent and bright with gold,
Then overgrown with thorns. And yet even then
The swains beheld that sacred scene with awe;
The grove, the rock, inspired religious fear.
"This grove," he said, "that crowns the lofty top
Of this fair hill, some deity, we know,
Inhabits, but what deity we doubt.
The Arcadians speak of Jupiter himself,
That they have often seen him, shaking here
His gloomy Ægis, while the thunder storms
Came rolling all around him. Turn thine eyes,
Behold that ruin; those dismantled walls,
Where once two towns, Janiculum ——,
By Janus this, and that by Saturn built,
Saturnia." Such discourse brought them beneath
The roof of poor Evander; thence they saw,
Where now the proud and stately forum stands,
The grazing herds wide scattered o'er the field.
Soon as he entered—"Hercules," he said,
"Victorious Hercules, on this threshold trod,
These walls contained him, humble as they are.
Dare to despise magnificence, my friend,
Prove thy divine descent by worth divine,
Nor view with haughty scorn this mean abode."
So saying, he led Æneas by the hand,
And placed him on a cushion stuffed with leaves,
Spread with the skin of a Lybistian bear.

[The episode of Venus and Vulcan omitted.]

While thus in Lemnos Vulcan was employed,
Awakened by the gentle dawn of day,
And the shrill song of birds beneath the eaves
Of his low mansion, old Evander rose.
His tunic, and the sandals on his feet,
And his good sword well girded to his side,
A panther's skin dependent from his left,
And over his right shoulder thrown aslant,
Thus was he clad. Two mastiffs followed him,
His whole retinue and his nightly guard.

THE SALAD, BY VIRGIL.*

The winter night now well nigh worn away,
The wakeful cock proclaimed approaching day,
When Simulus, poor tenant of a farm
Of narrowest limits, heard the shrill alarm,
Yawned, stretched his limbs, and anxious to provide
Against the pangs of hunger unsupplied,
By slow degrees his tattered bed forsook,
And poking in the dark, explored the nook
Where embers slept with ashes heaped around,
And with burnt fingers-ends the treasure found.
  It chanced that from a brand beneath his nose,
Sure proof of latent fire, some smoke arose;
When trimming with a pin the incrusted tow,
And stooping it towards the coals below,
He toils, with cheeks distended, to excite
The lingering flame, and gains at length a light.
With prudent heed he spreads his hands before
The quivering lamp, and opes his granary door.
Small was his stock, but taking for the day
A measured stint of twice eight pounds away,
With these his mill he seeks. A shelf at hand,
Fixed in the wall, affords his lamp a stand:
Then baring both his arms—a sleeveless coat
He girds, the rough exuviæ of a goat:
And with a rubber, for that use designed,
Cleansing his mill within—begins to grind;
Each hand has its employ; labouring amain,
This turns the winch, while that supplies the grain.
The stone revolving rapidly, now glows,
And the bruised corn a mealy current flows;
While he to make his heavy labour light
Takes off his left hand to relieve his right;
And chants with rudest accent, to beguile
His ceaseless toil, as rude a strain the while.
And now, "Dame Cybale, come forth!" he cries;
But Cybale, still slumbering, nought replies.
  From Afric she, the swain's sole serving-maid,
Whose face and form alike her birth betrayed.
With woolly locks, lips tumid, sable skin,
Wide bosom, udders flaccid, belly thin,

* "This singular poem, which the learned and judicious Heyné seems inclined to think a translation of Virgil's from the Greek of Parthenius, was translated into English by Cowper, during his depressive malady, June 1799."—Hayley, 1803.

Legs slender, broad and most misshapen feet,
Chapped into chinks, and parched with solar heat.
Such, summoned oft, she came; at his command
Fresh fuel heaped, the sleeping embers fanned,
And made in haste her simmering skillet steam,
Replenished newly from the neighbouring stream.
The labours of the mill performed, a sieve
The mingled flour and bran must next receive,
Which shaken oft shoots Ceres through refined,
And better dressed, her husks all left behind.
This done at once, his future plain repast
Unleavened on a shaven board he cast,
With tepid lymph first largely soaked it all,
Then gathered it with both hands to a ball,
And spreading it again with both hands wide,
With sprinkled salt the stiffened mass supplied;
At length the stubborn substance, duly wrought,
Takes from his palms impressed the shape it ought,
Becomes an orb—and quartered into shares,
The faithful mark of just division bears.
Last, on his hearth it finds convenient space,
For Cybale before had swept the place,
And there, with tiles and embers overspread,
She leaves it—reeking in its sultry bed.
Nor Simulus, while Vulcan thus alone
His part performed, proves heedless of his own,
But sedulous, not merely to subdue
His hunger, but to please his palate too,
Prepares more savoury food. His chimney side
Could boast no gammon, salted well and dried,
And hooked behind him; but sufficient store
Of bundled anise, and a cheese it bore;
A broad round cheese, which, through its centre strung
With a tough broom twig, in the corner hung;
The prudent hero, therefore, with address
And quick dispatch, now seeks another mess.
Close to his cottage lay a garden ground,
With reeds and osiers sparely girt around:
Small was the spot, but liberal to produce;
Nor wanted aught that serves a peasant's use,
And sometimes even the rich would borrow thence,
Although its tillage was his sole expense.
For oft as from his toils abroad he ceased,
Home-bound by weather, or some stated feast,
His debt of culture here he duly paid,
And only left the plough to wield the spade.
He knew to give each plant the soil it needs,
To drill the ground and cover close the seeds;

And could with ease compel the wanton rill
To turn and wind obedient to his will.
There flourished star-wort, and the branching beet,
The sorrel acid, and the mallow sweet,
The skirret, and the leek's aspiring kind,
The noxious poppy—quencher of the mind!
Salubrious sequel of a sumptuous board,
The lettuce, and the long huge-bellied gourd;
But these (for none his appetite controlled
With stricter sway) the thrifty rustic sold:
With broom twigs neatly bound, each kind apart,
He bore them ever to the public mart:
Whence laden still, but with a lighter load,
Of cash well earned, he took his homeward road,
Expending seldom, ere he quitted Rome,
His gains in flesh-meat for a feast at home.
There, at no cost, on onions, rank and red,
Or the curled endive's bitter leaf he fed:
On scallions sliced, or with a sensual gust,
On rockets—foul provocatives of lust!
Nor even shunned with smarting gums to press
Nasturtium—pungent face-distorting mess!
Some such regale now also in his thought,
With hasty steps his garden ground he sought;
There delving with his hands, he first displaced
Four plants of garlick, large, and rooted fast;
The tender tops of parsley next he culls,
Then the old rue bush shudders as he pulls;
And coriander last to these succeeds,
That hangs on slightest threads her trembling seeds.
Placed near his sprightly fire, he now demands
The mortar at his sable servant's hands;
When stripping all his garlick first, he tore
The exterior coats, and cast them on the floor,
Then cast away with like contempt the skin,
Flimsier concealment of the cloves within.
These searched, and perfect found, he one by one
Rinsed, and disposed within the hollow stone.
Salt added, and a lump of salted cheese,
With his injected herbs he covered these,
And tucking with his left his tunic tight,
And seizing fast the pestle with his right,
The garlick bruising first he soon expressed,
And mixed the various juices of the rest.
He grinds, and by degrees his herbs below,
Lost in each other, their own powers forego,
And with the cheese in compound, to the sight
Nor wholly green appear, nor wholly white.

His nostrils oft the forceful fume resent,
He cursed full oft his dinner for its scent;
Or with wry faces, wiping as he spoke
The trickling tears, cried "Vengeance on the smoke!"
The work proceeds: not roughly turns he now
The pestle, but in circles smooth and slow;
With cautious hand, that grudges what it spills,
Some drops of olive oil he next instils.
Then vinegar with caution scarcely less,
And gathering to a ball the medley mess,
Last, with two fingers frugally applied,
Sweeps the small remnant from the mortar's side.
And thus complete in figure and in kind,
Obtains at length the salad he designed.
And now black Cybale before him stands,
The cake drawn newly glowing in her hands,
He glad receives it, chasing far away
All fears of famine for the passing day;
His legs enclosed in buskins, and his head
In its tough casque of leather, forth he led
And yoked his steers, a dull obedient pair,
Then drove afield, and plunged the pointed share.

TRANSLATION FROM OVID.

TRIST. LIB. V. ELEG. XII.

Scribis, ut oblectem.

You bid me write to amuse the tedious hours,
And save from withering my poetic powers;
Hard is the task, my friend, for verse should flow
From the free mind, not fettered down by woe;
Restless amidst unceasing tempests tossed,
Whoe'er has cause for sorrow, I have most.
Would you bid Priam laugh, his sons all slain,
Or childless Niobe from tears refrain,
Join the gay dance, and lead the festive train?
Does grief or study most befit the mind
To this remote, this barbarous nook* confined?
Could you impart to my unshaken breast
The fortitude by Socrates possessed,

* Tomi on the Euxine Sea. He had been banished thither, it is believed, by Augustus for his love for the Emperor's sister, Julia.

Soon would it sink beneath such woes as mine,
For what is human strength to wrath divine?
Wise as he was, and heaven pronounced him so,
My sufferings would have laid that wisdom low.
Could I forget my country, thee and all,
And even the offence to which I owe my fall,
Yet fear alone would freeze the poet's vein,
While hostile troops swarm o'er the dreary plain.
Add that the fatal rust of long disuse
Unfits me for the service of the Muse.
Thistles and weeds are all we can expect
From the best soil impoverished by neglect;
Unexercised, and to his stall confined,
The fleetest racer would be left behind;
The best built bark that cleaves the watery way,
Laid useless by, would moulder and decay—
No hope remains that time shall me restore,
Mean as I was, to what I was before.
Think how a series of desponding cares
Benumbs the genius, and its force impairs.
How oft, as now, on this devoted sheet,
My verse constrained to move with measured feet
Reluctant and laborious limps along,
And proves itself a wretched exile's song.
What is it tunes the most melodious lays?
'Tis emulation and the thirst of praise;
A noble thirst, and not unknown to me,
While smoothly wafted on a calmer sea.
No, rather let the world forget my name.
Is it because the world approved my strain,
You prompt me to the same pursuit again?
But can a wretch like Ovid pant for fame?
No, let the Nine the ungrateful truth excuse,
I charge my hopeless ruin on the Muse,
And, like Perillus,* meet my just desert,
The victim of my own pernicious art.
Fool that I was to be so warned in vain,
And shipwrecked once, to tempt the deep again.
Ill fares the bard in this unlettered land,
None to consult, and none to understand.
The purest verse has no admirers here,
Their own rude language only suits their ear.
Rude as it is, at length familiar grown,
I learn it, and almost unlearn my own.

* The inventor of the Brazen Bull, in which Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum, burnt his victims alive. Perillus was burnt in it the first himself.

Yet to say truth, even here the Muse disdains
Confinement, and attempts her former strains,
But finds the strong desire is not the power,
And what her taste condemns, the flames devour
A part, perhaps, like this, escapes the doom,
And though unworthy, finds a friend at Rome;
But oh the cruel art, that could undo
Its votary thus! would that could perish too!

COMPLIMENTARY PIECES ADDRESSED TO MILTON.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN AND ITALIAN,

[MILTON'S PREFACE.]

TRANSLATED.

Well as the Author knows that the following testimonies are not so much about as above him, and that men of great ingenuity, as well as our friends, are apt, through abundant zeal, so to praise us as rather to draw their own likeness than ours, he was yet unwilling that the world should remain always ignorant of compositions that do him so much honour; and especially because he has other friends, who have, with much importunity, solicited their publication. Aware that excessive commendation awakens envy, he would with both hands thrust it from him, preferring just so much of that dangerous tribute as may of right belong to him; but at the same time he cannot deny that he sets the highest value on the suffrages of judicious and distinguished persons.

THE NEAPOLITAN, JOHN BAPTIST MANSO,

MARQUIS OF VILLA, TO THE ENGLISHMAN,

JOHN MILTON.

What features, form, mien, manners, with a mind
Oh how intelligent, and how refined!
Were but thy piety from fault as free,
Thou wouldst no Angle* but an Angel be.

* The reader will perceive that the Angle is essential, because the epigram turns upon it. The Angles were the Anglo-Saxons' own ancestors.

AN EPIGRAM ADDRESSED TO THE ENGLISHMAN, JOHN MILTON,

A POET WORTHY OF THREE LAURELS, THE GRECIAN, LATIN, AND ETRUSCAN.

BY JOHN SALSILLO, OF ROME.

Meles* and Mincio† both your urns depress!
Sebetus,‡ boast henceforth thy Tasso less!
But let the Thames o'erpeer all floods, since he,
For Milton famed, shall, single, match the three.

TO JOHN MILTON.

BY SELVAGGI.

Greece sound thy Homer's, Rome thy Virgil's name,
But England's Milton equals both in fame.

AN ODE

ADDRESSED TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS ENGLISHMAN,

MR. JOHN MILTON,

BY SIGNOR ANTONIO FRANCINI,

GENTLEMAN, OF FLORENCE.

Exalt me, Clio, to the skies,
That I may form a starry crown,
Beyond what Helicon supplies
In laureate garlands of renown;
To nobler worth be brighter glory given,
And to a heavenly mind a recompense from heaven.

Time's wasteful hunger cannot prey
On everlasting high desert,
Nor can Oblivion steal away
Its record graven on the heart;
Lodge but an arrow, Virtue, on the bow
That binds my lyre, and death shall be a vanquished foe.

* Meles is a river of Ionia, in the neighbourhood of Smyrna, whence Homer is called Melesigenes.—[C.]

† The Mincio watered the city of Mantua, famous as the birth-place of Virgil.—[C.]

‡ Sebetus is now the *Fiume della Maddelena*; it runs through Naples.—[C.]

In Ocean's blazing flood enshrined,
Whose vassal tide around her swells,
Albion, from other realms disjoined,
The prowess of the world excels;
She teems with heroes that to glory rise,
With more than human force in our astonished eyes.

To Virtue, driven from other lands,
Their bosoms yield a safe retreat;
Her law alone their deed commands,
Her smiles they feel divinely sweet;
Confirm my record, Milton, generous youth!
And by true virtue prove thy virtue's praise a truth.

Zeuxis, all energy and flame,
Set ardent forth in his career,
Urged to his task by Helen's fame,
Resounding ever in his ear;
To make his image to her beauty true,
From the collected fair each sovereign charm he drew.*

The bee, with subtlest skill endued,
Thus toils to earn her precious juice,
From all the flowery myriads strewed
O'er meadow and parterre profuse;
Confederate voices one sweet air compound,
And various chords consent in one harmonious sound.

An artist of celestial aim,
Thy genius, caught by moral grace,
With ardent emulation's flame
The steps of Virtue toiled to trace,
Observed in every land who brightest shone,
And blending all their best, make perfect good thy own.

From all in Florence born, or taught
Our country's sweetest accent there,
Whose works, with learned labour wrought,
Immortal honours justly share,
Thou hast such treasure drawn of purest ore,
That not even Tuscan bards can boast a richer store.

Babel confused, and with her towers
Unfinished spreading wide the plain,

---

* The portrait of Helen was painted at the request of the people of Crotona, who sent to the artist all their loveliest girls for models. Zeuxis selected five, and united their separate beauties in his picture.

Has served but to evince thy powers,
With all her tongues confused in vain,
Since not alone thy England's purest phrase,
But every polished realm thy various speech displays.

The secret things of heaven and earth,
By Nature, too reserved, concealed
From other minds of highest worth,
To thee are copiously revealed;
Thou knowest them clearly, and thy views attain
The utmost bounds prescribed to moral truth's domain.

Let Time no more his wing display,
And boast his ruinous career,
For Virtue, rescued from his sway,
His injuries may cease to fear;
Since all events that claim remembrance find
A chronicle exact in thy capacious mind.

Give me, that I may praise thy song,
Thy lyre, by which alone I can,
Which, placing thee the stars among,
Already proves thee more than man;
And Thames shall seem Permessus,* while his stream
Graced with a swan like thee, shall be my favourite theme.

I who beside the Arno, strain
To match thy merit with my lays,
Learn, after many an effort vain,
To admire thee rather than to praise;
And that by mute astonishment alone,
Not by the faltering tongue, thy worth may best be shown.

TO MR. JOHN MILTON OF LONDON.

A YOUTH eminent from his country and his virtues, who in his travels has made himself acquainted with many nations, and in his studies, with all, that, like another Ulysses, he might learn all that all could teach him;

Skilful in many tongues, on whose lips languages now mute so live again, that the idioms of all are insufficient to his praise; happy acquisition by which he understands the universal admiration and applause his talents have excited;

Whose endowments of mind and person move us to wonder, but at the same time fix us immoveable; whose works prompt us to extol him, but by their beauty strike us mute;

* A river in Bœotia which took its rise in Helicon. (Virg. Ecl. vi. 64.)

In whose memory the whole world is treasured; in whose intellect, wisdom; in whose heart, the ardent desire of glory; and in whose mouth, eloquence. Who with Astronomy for his conductor, hears the music of the spheres; with Philosophy for his teacher, deciphers the handwriting of God, in those wonders of creation which proclaim His greatness; and with the most unwearied literary industry for his associate,

Examines, restores, penetrates with ease the obscurities of antiquity, the desolations of ages, and the labyrinths of learning;

"But wherefore toil to reach these arduous heights?"

To him in short whose virtues the mouths of Fame are too few to celebrate, and whom astonishment forbids us to praise as he deserves, this tribute due to his merits, and the offering of reverence and affection, is paid by

CARLO DATI,
A patrician Florentine.
This great man's servant, and this good man's friend.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE LATIN AND ITALIAN POEMS OF MILTON.

ELEGY I.

TO CHARLES DIODATI.*

AT length, my friend, the far sent letters come,
Charged with thy kindness, to their destined home;
They come, at length, from Deva's† western side,
Where prone she seeks the salt Vergivian‡ tide.
Trust me, my joy is great that thou shouldst be,
Though born of foreign race, yet born for me,
And that my sprightly friend, now free to roam,
Must seek again so soon his wonted home.
I well content, where Thames with influent tide
My native city laves, meantime reside,
Nor zeal nor duty now my steps impel
To reedy Cam, and my forbidden cell.§

* Diodati was a schoolfellow of Milton at St. Paul's, of Italian extraction, nephew Giovanni Diodati, the translator of the Bible into Italian, and son of Theodore Diodati, a physician of eminence, who married and settled in England. Charles Diodati's early death formed the subject of the *Epitaphium Damonis*.

† The Dee of Chester.

‡ The Vergivian Sea, so called by Ptolemy, was the Irish sea between England and Ireland.

§ Milton had been rusticated on account of a quarrel with his tutor.

Nor aught of pleasure in those fields have I,
That to the musing bard all shade deny.
'Tis time that I a pedant's threats* disdain,
And fly from wrongs my soul will ne'er sustain.
If peaceful days, in lettered leisure spent
Beneath my father's roof, be banishment,
Then call me banished, I will ne'er refuse
A name expressive of the lot I choose.
I would that, exiled to the Pontic shore,
Rome's hapless bard† had suffered nothing more;
He then had equalled even Homer's lays,
And Virgil! thou hadst won but second praise:
For here I woo the Muse with no control,
And here my books—my life—absorb me whole.
Here too I visit, or to smile or weep,
The winding theatre's majestic sweep;
The grave or gay colloquial scene recruits
My spirits, spent in learning's long pursuits;
Whether some senior shrewd, or spendthrift heir,
Suitor, or soldier, now unarmed, be there,
Or some coifed brooder o'er a ten years' cause,
Thunder the Norman gibberish of the laws.
The lacquey, there, oft dupes the wary sire,
And, artful, speeds the enamoured son's desire.
There, virgins oft, unconscious what they prove,
What love is know not, yet, unknowing love.
Or, if impassioned tragedy wield high
The bloody sceptre, give her locks to fly,
Wild as the winds, and roll her haggard eye.
I gaze and grieve, still cherishing my grief;
At times e'en bitter tears yield sweet relief,
As, when from bliss untasted torn away,
Some youth dies, hapless, on his bridal day;
Or when the ghost, sent back from shades below,
Fills the assassin's heart with vengeful woe;
When Troy, or Argos, the dire scene affords,
Or Creon's hall‡ laments its guilty lords.
Nor always city-pent, or pent at home,
I dwell; but, when spring calls me forth to roam,
Expatiate in our proud suburban shades
Of branching elm that never sun pervades.
Here many a virgin troop I may descry,
Like stars of mildest influence, gliding by.
O forms divine! O looks that might inspire
Even Jove himself, grown old, with young desire!

---

* His Tutor, Chappell. † Ovid.

‡ In Thebes—the guilty lords are Eteocles and Polynices the brothers—sons of Œdipus and Jocasta, who fell in their unnatural strife.

Oft have I gazed on gem-surpassing eyes,
Out-sparkling every star that gilds the skies,
Necks whiter than the ivory arm bestowed
By Jove on Pelops, or the milky road!
Bright locks, Love's golden snare! these falling low,
Those playing wanton o'er the graceful brow!
Cheeks, too, more winning sweet than after shower
Adonis turned to Flora's favourite flower!
Yield, heroines, yield, and ye who shared the embrace
Of Jupiter in ancient times, give place!
Give place, ye turbaned fair of Persia's coast!
And ye, not less renowned, Assyria's boast!
Submit, ye nymphs of Greece! ye, once the bloom
Of Ilion! and all ye of haughty Rome,
Who swept, of old, her theatres with trains
Redundant, and still live in classic strains!
To British damsels beauty's palm is due;
Aliens! to follow them is fame for you.
O city founded by Dardanian hands,
Whose towering front the circling realm commands,
Too blest abode! no loveliness we see
In all the earth, but it abounds in thee.
The virgin multitude that daily meets,
Radiant with gold and beauty, in thy streets,
Outnumbers all her train of starry fires
With which Diana gilds thy lofty spires.
Fame says that, wafted hither by her doves,
With all her host of quiver-bearing loves,
Venus, preferring Paphian scenes no more,
Has fixed her empire on thy nobler shore.
But, lest the sightless boy enforce my stay,
I leave these happy walls while yet I may.
Immortal moly* shall secure my heart
From all the sorcery of Circæan art,
And I will e'en repass Cam's reedy pools
To face once more the warfare of the schools,
Meantime accept this trifle! rhymes though few,
Yet such as prove thy friend's remembrance true!

* Cowper thus translates the account given in the Odyssey of Moly, by the magical power of which Ulysses was enabled to escape from Circe:—

"So spake the Argicide, and from the earth
That plant extracting, placed it in my hand,
Then taught me all its powers. Black was the root,
Milk-white the blossom; moly is its name
In heaven; not easily by mortal man
Dug forth, but all is easy to the gods."

Odyssey, x. 370-375.

ELEGY II.

ON THE DEATH OF THE UNIVERSITY BEDEL AT CAMBRIDGE.*

THEE, whose refulgent staff and summons clear,
Minerva's flock long time was wont to obey,
Although thyself a herald, famous here,
The last of heralds, Death, has snatched away.
He calls on all alike, nor even deigns
To spare the office that himself sustains.

Thy locks were whiter than the plumes displayed
By Leda's paramour† in ancient time;
But thou wast worthy ne'er to have decayed,
Or, Æson-like,‡ to know a second prime.
Worthy, for whom some goddess should have won
New life, oft kneeling to Apollo's son.§

Commissioned to convene with hasty call
The gowned tribes, how graceful wouldst thou stand!
So stood Cyllenius|| erst in Priam's hall,
Wing-footed messenger of Jove's command!
And so Eurybates,¶ when he addressed
To Peleus' son, Atrides' proud behest.

Dread queen of sepulchres! whose rigorous laws
And watchful eyes run through the realms below,
Oh, oft too adverse to Minerva's cause!
Too often to the muse not less a foe!
Choose meaner marks, and with more equal aim
Pierce useless drones, earth's burthen, and its shame!

Flow, therefore, tears for him from every eye,
All ye disciples of the muses, weep!
Assembling all in robes of sable dye,
Around his bier lament his endless sleep!
And let complaining Elegy rehearse
In every school her sweetest, saddest verse.

* Richard Redding, of St. John's College, M.A. He died in October, 1626.
† The Swan—Jupiter had turned himself into that bird.
‡ Æson was restored to youth by his daughter Medea.
§ Esculapius, the god of medicine. || Mercury.
¶ One of the heralds sent to Achilles by Agamemnon.

ELEGY III.

ON THE DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.*

Sept. 21, 1626.

SILENT I sat, dejected, and alone,
Making in thought the public woes my own,
When first arose the image in my breast
Of England's suffering by that scourge the pest!†
How Death, his funeral torch and scythe in hand,
Entering the lordliest mansions of the land,
Has laid the gem-illumined palace low,
And levelled tribes of nobles at a blow.
I next deplored the famed fraternal‡ pair,
Too soon to ashes turned and empty air!
The heroes next, whom snatched into the skies
All Belgia saw, and followed with her sighs;
But thee far most I mourned, regretted most,
Winton's chief shepherd, and her worthiest boast!
Poured out in tears I thus complaining said:—
"Death, next in power to him who rules the dead!
Is't not enough that all the woodlands yield
To thy fell force, and every verdant field;
That lilies, at one noisome blast of thine,
And e'en the Cyprian queen's own roses pine;
That oaks themselves, although the running rill
Suckle their roots, must wither at thy will;
That all the wingèd nations, even those
Whose heaven-directed flight the future shows,
And all the beasts that in dark forests stray,
And all the herds of Proteus§ are thy prey.
Ah envious! armed with powers so unconfined!
Why stain thy hands with blood of human kind?
Why take delight, with darts that never roam,
To chase a heaven-born spirit from her home?"
While thus I mourned, the star of evening stood,
Now newly risen above the western flood,
And Phœbus from his morning goal again
Had reached the gulfs of the Iberian main.
I wished repose, and, on my couch reclined,
Took early rest, to night and sleep resigned:

---

* Lancelot Andrewes, Fuller's "peerless prelate."

† The plague which ravaged England in 1626.

‡ Prince Christian of Brunswick, and Count Mansfelt. They were brothers in arms and the Protestant champions. They both died in 1626.

§ Marine creatures. Proteus was the shepherd of the sea. See Georg. iv.

When—Oh for words to paint what I beheld!
I seemed to wander in a spacious field,
Where all the champaign glowed with purple light,
Like that of sunrise on the mountain height;
Flowers over all the field, of every hue
That ever Iris wore, luxuriant grew.
Nor Chloris,* with whom amorous zephyrs play,
E'er dressed Alcinous' garden half so gay.†
A silent current, like the Tagus, rolled
O'er golden sands, but sands of purer gold;
With dewy airs Favonius fanned the flowers,
With airs awakened under rosy bowers.
Such, poets feign, irradiate all o'er
The sun's abode on India's utmost shore.
While I that splendour, and the mingled shade
Of fruitful vines, with wonder fixed, surveyed,
At once, with looks that beamed celestial grace,
The seer of Winton stood before my face.
His snowy vesture's hem, descending low,
His golden sandals swept, and, pure as snow
New fallen, shone the mitre on his brow.
Where'er he trod, a tremulous sweet sound
Of gladness shook the flowery scene around:
Attendant angels clap their starry wings,
The trumpet shakes the sky, all ether rings;
Each chants his welcome, folds him to his breast,
And thus a sweeter voice than all the rest:
"Ascend, my son! thy Father's kingdom share!
My son! henceforth be freed from every care!"
So spake the voice, and at its tender close
With psaltery's sound the angelic band arose;
Then night retired, and, chased by dawning day,
The visionary bliss passed all away.
I mourned my banished sleep with fond concern;
Frequent to me may dreams like this return!

ELEGY IV.

TO HIS TUTOR, THOMAS YOUNG.‡

CHAPLAIN TO THE ENGLISH FACTORY AT HAMBURGH.

Hence my epistle—skim the deep—fly o'er
Yon smooth expanse to the Teutonic shore!

* Flora. † See the account of his gardens in the Odyssey.
‡ Young was private tutor to Milton before he went to St Paul's.

Haste—lest a friend should grieve for thy delay—
And the gods grant that nothing thwart thy way!
I will myself invoke the king* who binds
In his Sicanian echoing vault the winds,
With Doris† and her nymphs, and all the throng
Of azure gods, to speed thee safe along.
But rather, to ensure thy happier haste,
Ascend Medea's chariot,‡ if thou mayst;
Or that whence young Triptolemus§ of yore
Descended, welcome on the Scythian shore.
The sands that line the German coast descried,
To opulent Hamburga turn aside,
So called, if legendary fame be true,
From Hama,|| whom a club-armed Cimbrian slew!
There lives, deep learned and primitively just,
A faithful steward of his Christian trust,
My friend, and favourite inmate of my heart,
That now is forced to want its better part!
What mountains now, and seas, alas, how wide!
From me this other, dearer self divide,
Dear as the sage renowned for moral truth¶
To the prime spirit of the Attic youth!
Dear as the Stagyrite** to Ammon's son,††
His pupil, who disdained the world he won!
Nor so did Chiron, or so Phœnix shine‡‡
In young Achilles' eyes, as he in mine.
First led by him through sweet Aonian§§ shade,
Each sacred haunt of Pindus I surveyed;
And favoured by the Muse, whom I implored,
Thrice on my lip the hallowed stream I poured.
But thrice the sun's resplendent chariot rolled
To Aries, has new tinged his fleece with gold,
And Chloris twice has dressed the meadows gay,
And twice has summer parched their bloom away,
Since last delighted on his looks I hung,
Or my ear drank the music of his tongue:
Fly, therefore, and surpass the tempest's speed;
Aware thyself that there is urgent need!
Him, entering, thou shalt haply seated see
Beside his spouse, his infants on his knee;
Or turning, page by page, with studious look,
Some bulky father, or God's Holy Book;

---

* Eolus, god of the east wind. Sicania was a name for Sicily.

† Mother of the Nereids, or sea-nymphs.

‡ Drawn by winged dragons.

§ Triptolemus was presented by Ceres with a *winged* chariot.

A Saxon warrior slain by a giant. ¶ Socrates. ** Aristotle. †† Alexander.

‡‡ Chiron and Phœnix were the tutors of Achilles. §§ Helicon.

Or ministering (which is his weightiest care)
To Christ's assembled flock their heavenly fare.
Give him, whatever his employment be,
Such gratulation as he claims from me!
And, with a downcast eye, and carriage meek,
Addressing him, forget not thus to speak:
"If compassed round with arms thou canst attend
To verse, verse greets thee from a distant friend.
Long due, and late, I left the English shore;
But make me welcome for that cause the more!
Such from Ulysses, his chaste wife to cheer,
The slow epistle came, though late, sincere.
But wherefore this? why palliate I the deed
For which the culprit's self could hardly plead?
Self-charged, and self-condemned, his proper part
He feels neglected, with an aching heart;
But thou forgive—delinquents who confess,
And pray forgiveness, merit anger less;
From timid foes the lion turns away,
Nor yawns upon or rends a crouching prey,
Even pike-wielding Thracians learn to spare,
Won by soft influence of a suppliant prayer;
And Heaven's dread thunderbolt arrested stands
By a cheap victim and uplifted hands.
Long had he wished to write, but was withheld,
And writes at last, by Love alone compelled,
For Fame, too often true when she alarms,
Reports thy neighbouring fields a scene of arms;*
Thy city against fierce besiegers barred,
And all the Saxon chiefs for fight prepared.
Enyo† wastes thy country wide around,
And saturates with blood the tainted ground;
Mars rests contented in his Thrace no more,
But goads his steeds to fields of German gore,
The ever verdant olive fades and dies,
And Peace, the trumpet-hating goddess, flies,
Flies from that earth which Justice long had left,
And leaves the world of its last guard bereft.
Thus Horror girds thee round. Meantime alone
Thou dwellest, and helpless, in a soil unknown;
Poor, and receiving from a foreign hand
The aid denied thee in thy native land.
O ruthless country, and unfeeling more
Than thy own billow-beaten chalky shore!
Leavest thou to foreign care the worthies given

---

* Alluding to the war between the Protestant League and the Imperialists.
† The goddess of war.

By providence to guide thy steps to heaven?
His ministers, commissioned to proclaim
Eternal blessings in a Saviour's name!
Ah then most worthy, with a soul unfed,
In Stygian night to lie for ever dead!
So once the venerable Tishbite strayed
An exiled fugitive from shade to shade,
When, flying Ahab and his fury wife,
In lone Arabian wilds he sheltered life;
So from Philippi wandered forth forlorn
Cilician Paul, with sounding scourges torn;
And Christ himself so left, and trod no more
The thankless Gergesene's forbidden shore.
But thou take courage! strive against despair!
Quake not with dread, nor nourish anxious care!
Grim war indeed on every side appears,
And thou art menaced by a thousand spears;
Yet none shall drink thy blood, or shall offend
Even the defenceless bosom of my friend.
For thee the Ægis of thy God shall hide,
Jehovah's self shall combat on thy side,
The same who vanquished under Sion's towers
At silent midnight all Assyria's powers,
The same who overthrew in ages past
Damascus' sons that laid Samaria waste!
Their king he filled and them with fatal fears
By mimic sounds of clarions in their ears,
Of hoofs, and wheels, and neighings from afar,
Of clashing armour, and the din of war.
Thou, therefore (as the most afflicted may),
Still hope, and triumph o'er thy evil day!
Look forth, expecting happier times to come,
And to enjoy, once more, thy native home!

ELEGY V.

ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

Time, never wandering from his annual round,
Bids Zephyr breathe the spring, and thaw the ground
Bleak Winter flies, new verdure clothes the plain,
And Earth assumes her transient youth again.
Dream I, or also to the spring belong
Increase of genius, and new powers of song?

Spring gives them, and, how strange soe'er it seems,
Impels me now to some harmonious themes.
Castalia's fountain, and the forkèd hill*
By day, by night, my raptured fancy fill;
My bosom burns and heaves, I hear within
A sacred sound that prompts me to begin.
Lo! Phœbus comes! with his bright hair he blends
The radiant laurel wreath; Phœbus descends!
I mount, and undepressed by cumbrous clay,
Through cloudy regions win my easy way;
Rapt through poetic shadowy haunts I fly,
The shrines all open to my dauntless eye,
My spirit searches all the realms of light,
And no Tartarian gulfs elude my sight.
But this ecstatic trance—this glorious storm
Of inspiration—what will it perform?
Spring claims the verse that with his influence glows,
And shall be paid with what himself bestows.
  Thou, veiled with opening foliage, lead'st the throng
Of feathered minstrels, Philomel! in song;
Let us, in concert, to the season sing,
Civic and sylvan heralds of the spring.
  With notes triumphant Spring's approach declare!
To Spring, ye muses, annual tribute bear!
The Orient left, and Ethiopia's plains,
The Sun now northward turns his golden reins;
Night creeps not now, yet rules with gentle sway,
And drives her dusky horrors swift away;
Now less fatigued, on this ethereal plain
Boötes follows his celestial wain;†
And now the radiant sentinels above,
Less numerous, watch around the courts of Jove,
For, with the night, Force, Ambush, Slaughter fly,
And no gigantic guilt alarms the sky.
Now, haply says some shepherd, while he views
Recumbent on a rock, the reddening dews,
This night, this, surely, Phœbus missed the fair,
Who stops his chariot by her amorous care.
Cynthia,‡ delighted by the morning's glow,
Speeds to the woodland, and resumes her bow;
Resigns her beams, and, glad to disappear,
Blesses his aid, who shortens her career.

* Helicon.

† The Great Bear, called also Charles's Wain, or waggon. "Boötes" is the constellation called the Waggoner, who is said to be "less fatigued" because he drives the wain higher in the sky.

‡ Diana, or the moon.

"Come," Phœbus cries, "Aurora, come—too late
Thou lingerest, slumbering, with thy withered mate;*
Leave him, and to Hymettus' top repair!
Thy darling Cephalus expects thee there."
The goddess with a blush her love betrays,
But mounts, and, driving rapidly, obeys.
Earth now desires thee, Phœbus! and, to engage
Thy warm embrace, casts off the guise of age;
Desires thee, and deserves; for who so sweet
When her rich bosom courts thy genial heat?
Her breath imparts to every breeze that blows
Arabia's harvest and the Paphian rose.
Her lofty front she diadems around
With sacred pines, like Ops on Ida crowned;
Her dewy locks, with various flowers new blown,
She interweaves, various, and all her own;
For Proserpine, in such a wreath attired,
Tænarian Dis† himself with love inspired.
Fear not, lest, cold and coy, the nymph refuse!
Herself, with all her sighing zephyrs, sues;
Each courts thee, fanning soft his scented wing,
And all her groves with warbled wishes ring.
Nor, unendowed and indigent, aspires
The amorous earth to engage thy warm desires,
But, rich in balmy drugs, assists thy claim,
Divine physician! to that glorious name.
If splendid recompense, if gifts can move
Desire in thee (gifts often purchase love),
She offers all the wealth her mountains hide,
And all that rests beneath the boundless tide.
How oft, when headlong from the heavenly steep
She sees thee playing in the western deep,
How oft she cries—"Ah Phœbus, why repair
Thy wasted force, why seek refreshment there?
Can Tethys‡ win thee? wherefore shouldst thou lave
A face so fair in her unpleasant wave?
Come seek my green retreats, and rather choose
To cool thy tresses in my crystal dews.
The grassy turf shall yield thee sweeter rest;
Come, lay thy evening glories on my breast,
And breathing fresh, through many a humid rose,
Soft whispering airs shall lull thee to repose!
No fears I feel like Semele§ to die,
Nor lest thy burning wheels approach too nigh,

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* Tithonus. † Pluto.
‡ A water goddess—mother of the river gods and wife of Oceanus.
§ Semele was consumed by Jupiter's lightnings.

For thou canst govern them, here therefore rest,
And lay thy evening glories on my breast!"
  Thus breathes the wanton Earth her amorous flame,
And all her countless offspring feel the same;
For Cupid now through every region strays,
Brightening his faded fires with solar rays;
His new-strung bow sends forth a deadlier sound,
And his new-pointed shafts more deeply wound;
Nor Dian's self escapes him now untried,
Nor even Vesta at her altar side;
His mother too repairs her beauty's wane,
And seems sprung newly from the deep again.
Exulting youths the hymeneal sing,
With Hymen's name roofs, rocks, and valleys ring;
He, new attired, and by the season drest,
Proceeds, all fragrant, in his saffron vest.
Now many a golden-cinctured virgin roves
To taste the pleasures of the fields and groves,
All wish, and each alike, some favourite youth
Hers, in the bonds of hymeneal truth.
Now pipes the shepherd through his reeds again,
Nor Phillis wants a song that suits the strain;
With songs the seaman hails the starry sphere,
And dolphins rise from the abyss to hear:
Jove feels himself the season, sports again
With his fair spouse, and banquets all his train.
Now too the Satyrs, in the dusk of eve,
Their mazy dance through flowery meadows weave,
And neither god nor goat, but both in kind,
Silvanus,* wreathed with cypress, skips behind.
The Dryads leave their hollow sylvan cells
To roam the banks and solitary dells;
Pan riots now; and from his amorous chafe
Ceres and Cybele seem hardly safe,
And Faunus,† all on fire to reach the prize,
In chase of some enticing Oread‡ flies;
She bounds before, but fears too swift a bound,
And hidden lies, but wishes to be found.
Our shades entice the immortals from above,
And some kind power presides o'er every grove;
And long, ye powers, o'er every grove preside,
For all is safe, and blessed, where ye abide!
Return, O Jove! the age of gold restore—
Why choose to dwell where storms and thunder roar?

* The wood god. † God of shepherds.
‡ A wood nymph.

At least thou, Phœbus! moderate thy speed!
Let not the vernal hours too swift proceed,
Command rough winter back, nor yield the pole
Too soon to night's encroaching, long control!

ELEGY VI.

TO CHARLES DIODATI,

Who, while he spent his Christmas in the country, sent the author a poetical epistle, in which he requested that his verses, if not so good as usual, might be excused on account of the many feasts to which his friends invited him, and which would not allow him leisure to finish them as he wished.

WITH no rich viands overcharged, I send
Health, which perchance you want, my pampered friend.
But wherefore should thy Muse tempt mine away
From what she loves, from darkness into day?
Art thou desirous to be told how well
I love thee, and in verse? verse cannot tell,
For verse has bounds, and must in measure move,
But neither bounds nor measure knows my love.
How pleasant, in thy lines described, appear
December's harmless sports, and rural cheer!
French spirits kindling with cærulean fires,*
And all such gambols as the time inspires!
Think not that wine against good verse offends,
The Muse and Bacchus have been always friends;
Nor Phœbus blushes sometimes to be found
With ivy, rather than with laurel, crowned.
The Nine themselves ofttimes have joined the song
And revels of the Bacchanalian throng;
Not even Ovid could in Scythian air
Sing sweetly—why? no vine would flourish there.
What in brief numbers sung Anacreon's muse?
Wine, and the rose that sparkling wine bedews.
Pindar with Bacchus glows—his every line
Breathes the rich fragrance of inspiring wine,
While, with loud crash o'erturned, the chariot lies,
And brown with dust the fiery courser flies.
The Roman lyrist steeped in wine his lays
So sweet in Glycera's and Chloe's praise.†

* Brandy lighted in snapdragon.
† See Horace, ode i., 19 and 23 lines.

Now too the plenteous feast and mantling bowl
Nourish the vigour of thy sprightly soul;
The flowing goblet makes thy numbers flow,
And casks not wine alone, but verse bestow.
Thus Phœbus favours, and the arts attend,
Whom Bacchus and whom Ceres both befriend.
What wonder, then, thy verses are so sweet,
In which these triple powers so kindly meet!
The lute now also sounds, with gold inwrought,
And touched with flying fingers nicely taught,
In tapestried halls, high roofed, the sprightly lyre
Directs the dancers of the virgin choir.
If dull repletion fright the Muse away,
Sights gay as these may more invite her stay;
And, trust me, while the ivory keys resound,
Fair damsels sport, and perfumes steam around,
Apollo's influence, like ethereal flame,
Shall animate, at once, thy glowing frame,
And all the Muse shall rush into thy breast,
By love and music's blended powers possest.
For numerous powers light Elegy befriend,
Hear her sweet voice, and at her call attend;
Her, Bacchus, Ceres, Venus, all approve,
And, with his blushing mother, gentle Love.
Hence to such bards we grant the copious use
Of banquets, and the vine's delicious juice.
But they who demigods and heroes praise,
And feats performed in Jove's more youthful days,
Who now the counsels of high heaven explore,
Now shades that echo the Cerberean roar,
Simply let these, like him of Samos,* live,
Let herbs to them a bloodless banquet give;
In beechen goblets let their beverage shine,
Cool from the crystal spring, their sober wine!
Their youth should pass in innocence secure
From stain licentious, and in manners pure,
Pure as the priest, when robed in white he stands,
The fresh lustration, ready in his hands.
Thus Linus† lived, and thus, as poets write,
Tiresias,‡ wiser for his loss of sight;
Thus exiled Chalcas,§ thus the Bard of Thrace,||
Melodious tamer of the savage race;

* Pythagoras. † A son of Apollo.

‡ He was gifted with the power of understanding the language of birds to atone for his loss of sight, by Pallas.

§ The Grecian soothsayer at the siege of Troy. || Orpheus.

Thus, trained by temperance, Homer led, of yore,
His chief of Ithaca* from shore to shore,
Through magic Circe's monster-peopled reign,
And shoals insidious with the siren train;
And through the realms where grizzly spectres dwell,
Whose tribes he fettered in a gory spell;
For these are sacred bards, and from above
Drink large infusions from the mind of Jove.
  Wouldst thou (perhaps 'tis hardly worth thine ear)
Wouldst thou be told my occupation here?
The promised King of Peace employs my pen,
The eternal covenant made for guilty men,
The new-born Deity with infant cries
Filling the sordid hovel where he lies,
The hymning angels, and the herald star,
That led the wise who sought him from afar,
And idols on their own unhallowed shore
Dashed, at his birth, to be revered no more.
  This theme† on reeds of Albion I rehearse:
The dawn of that blest day inspired the verse;
Verse that, reserved in secret, shall attend
Thy candid voice, my critic, and my friend!

ELEGY VII.

As yet a stranger to the gentle fires
That Amathusia's‡ smiling queen inspires,
Not seldom I derided Cupid's darts,
And scorned his claim to rule all human hearts.
"Go, child," I said, "transfix the timorous dove!
An easy conquest suits an infant love;
Enslave the sparrow, for such prize shall be
Sufficient triumph to a chief like thee!
Why aim thy idle arms at human kind?
Thy shafts prevail not 'gainst the noble mind."
  The Cyprian heard, and kindling into ire,
(None kindles sooner) burned with double fire.
  It was the spring, and newly risen day
Peeped o'er the hamlets on the first of May;
My eyes, too tender for the blaze of light,
Still sought the shelter of retiring night,
When Love approached, in painted plumes arrayed,
The insidious god his rattling darts betrayed,

* Ulysses. † The Hymn on the Nativity.
‡ Venus, so called from Amathus in Cyprus, where she had a temple.

Nor less his infant features, and the sly,
Sweet intimations of his threatening eye.
Such the Sigean boy* is seen above
Filling the goblet for imperial Jove;
Such he on whom the nymphs bestowed their charms,
Hylas,† who perished in a Naiad's arms.
Angry he seemed, yet graceful in his ire,
And added threats not destitute of fire.
"My power," he said, "by others' pain alone,
'Twere best to learn; now learn it by thy own!
With those that feel my power, that power attest,
And in thy anguish be my sway confest!
I vanquished Phœbus, though returning vain
From his new triumph o'er the Python slain,
And when he thinks on Daphne,‡ even he
Will yield the prize of archery to me.
A dart less true the Parthian horseman sped,
Behind him killed, and conquered as he fled:
Less true the expert Cydonian,§ and less true
The youth‖ whose shaft his latent Procris slew.
Vanquished by me see huge Orion bend,
By me Alcides, and Alcides' friend.¶
At me should Jove himself a bolt design,
His bosom first should bleed transfixed by mine.
But all thy doubts this shaft will best explain,
Nor shall it reach thee with a trivial pain.
Thy Muse, vain youth, shall not thy peace ensure,
Nor Phœbus' serpent** yield thy wound a cure."
He spoke, and, waving a bright shaft in air,
Sought the warm bosom of the Cyprian fair.
That thus a child should bluster in my ear,
Provoked my laughter more than moved my fear.
I shunned not, therefore, public haunts, but strayed
Careless in city or suburban shade,
And, passing and repassing, nymphs that moved
With grace divine beheld where'er I roved.
Bright shone the vernal day with double blaze
As beauty gave new force to Phœbus' rays.
By no grave scruples checked I freely eyed
The dangerous show, rash youth my only guide,
And many a look of many a fair unknown
Met full, unable to control my own.

* Ganymede. † The nymphs fell in love with him and drew him into a fountain.
‡ She fled from Apollo, and was turned into a laurel.
§ The Cydonians were famed for their skill in archery.
‖ Cephalus; he shot his wife Procris, by mistake. ¶ Telamon.
** Esculapius, who came to Rome in the form of a snake.

But one I marked (then peace forsook my breast),
One—Oh how far superior to the rest!
What lovely features! such the Cyprian queen
Herself might wish, and Juno wish her mien.
The very nymph was she, whom, when I dared
His arrows, Love had even then prepared!
Nor was himself remote, nor unsupplied
With torch well trimmed and quiver at his side;
Now to her lips he clung, her eyelids now,
Then settled on her cheeks, or on her brow;
And with a thousand wounds from every part
Pierced and transpierced my undefended heart.
A fever, new to me, of fierce desire
Now seized my soul, and I was all on fire;
But she, the while, whom only I adore,
Was gone, and vanished, to appear no more.
In silent sadness I pursue my way;
I pause, I turn, proceed, yet wish to stay,
And, while I follow her in thought, bemoan
With tears my soul's delight so quickly flown.
When Jove had hurled him to the Lemnian coast,
So Vulcan sorrowed for Olympus lost,
And so Œclides,* sinking into night,
From the deep gulf looked up to distant light.
  Wretch that I am, what hopes for me remain,
Who cannot cease to love, yet love in vain?
Oh! could I once, once more, behold the fair,
Speak to her, tell her of the pangs I bear;
Perhaps she is not adamant; would show,
Perhaps, some pity at my tale of woe.
O inauspicious flame!—'tis mine to prove
A matchless instance of disastrous love.
Ah! spare me, gentle power!—If such thou be,
Let not thy deeds and nature disagree.
Spare me, and I will worship at no shrine
With vow and sacrifice save only thine.
Now I revere thy fires, thy bow, thy darts:
Now own thee sovereign of all human hearts.
Remove! no—grant me still this raging woe!
Sweet is the wretchedness that lovers know:
But pierce hereafter (should I chance to see
One destined mine) at once both her and me.
  Such were the trophies that, in earlier days,
By Vanity seduced, I toiled to raise;
Studious, yet indolent, and urged by Youth,
That worst of teachers! from the ways of Truth;

* One of the Argonauts. He was swallowed up by the earth.

Till Learning taught me in his shady bower
To quit Love's servile yoke, and spurn his power.
Then, on a sudden, the fierce flame suppressed,
A frost continual settled on my breast,
Whence Cupid fears his flames extinct to see,
And Venus dreads a Diomede in me.

EPIGRAMS.

ON THE INVENTOR OF GUNS.

Praise in old time the sage Prometheus won,
Who stole ethereal radiance from the sun;
But greater he, whose bold invention strove
To emulate the fiery bolts of Jove.

[The Poems on the subject of the Gunpowder Treason I have not translated, both because the matter of them is unpleasant, and because they are written with an asperity, which, however it might be warranted in Milton's day, would be extremely unseasonable now.—C.]

TO LEONORA* SINGING AT ROME.†

Another Leonora once inspired
Tasso, with fatal love to phrensy fired;
But how much happier, lived he now, were he,
Pierced with whatever pangs for love of thee!
Since could he hear that heavenly voice of thine,
With Adriana's ‡ lute of sound divine,
Fiercer than Pentheus' § though his eye might roll,
Or idiot apathy benumb his soul,
You still, with medicinal sounds might cheer
His senses wandering in a blind career;
And, sweetly breathing through his wounded breast,
Charm, with soul-soothing song, his thoughts to rest.

TO THE SAME.

Naples, too credulous, ah! boast no more
The sweet-voiced siren buried on thy shore,

* Leonora Baroni, a celebrated singer. Milton heard her at Cardinal Barberini's.

† "I have translated only two of the three poetical compliments addressed to Leonora, as they appear to me far superior to what I have omitted."—C.

‡ Her mother, who accompanied her on the lute. § A mad king of Thebes.

That when Parthenope* deceased, she gave
Her sacred dust to a Chalcidic† grave,
For still she lives, but has exchanged the hoarse
Pausilipo for Tiber's placid course,
Where, idol of all Rome, she now in chains
Of magic song both gods and men detains.

THE COTTAGER AND HIS LANDLORD.

A FABLE.

A PEASANT to his lord paid yearly court,
Presenting pippins of so rich a sort
That he, displeased to have a part alone,
Removed the tree, that all might be his own.
The tree, too old to travel, though before
So fruitful, withered, and would yield no more.
The squire, perceiving all his labour void,
Cursed his own pains, so foolishly employed,
And "Oh," he cried, "that I had lived content
With tribute, small indeed, but kindly meant!
My avarice has expensive proved to me,
Has cost me both my pippins and my tree."

TO CHRISTINA, QUEEN OF SWEDEN.

WRITTEN AS FOR CROMWELL, AND TO BE SENT WITH HIS PICTURE.

CHRISTINA, maiden of heroic mien!
Star of the North! of northern stars the queen!
Behold what wrinkles I have earned, and how
The iron casque still chafes my veteran brow,
While, following Fate's dark footsteps, I fulfil
The dictates of a hardy people's will.
But softened in thy sight my looks appear,
Not to all queens or kings alike severe.

ON THE DEATH OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR.

A PHYSICIAN.‡

LEARN, ye nations of the earth,
The condition of your birth,

* One of the syrens. † From Chalcis, whence the Greek colonies of South Italy came.
‡ The Vice Chancellor was Dr. John Goslyn, Regius Professor of Medicine at Cambridge. He died on the 21st October, 1626.

Now be taught your feeble state!
Know, that all must yield to fate!

If the mournful rover, Death,
Say but once—"Resign your breath!"
Vainly of escape you dream,
You must pass the Stygian stream.

Could the stoutest overcome
Death's assault, and baffle doom,
Hercules had both withstood,
Undiseased by Nessus'* blood.

Ne'er had Hector pressed the plain,
By a trick of Pallas slain,
Nor the chief to Jove allied†
By Achilles' phantom died.

Could enchantments life prolong,
Circe, saved by magic song,
Still had lived, and equal skill
Had preserved Medea‡ still.

Dwelt in herbs and drugs a power
To avert man's destined hour,
Learned Machaon§ should have known
Doubtless to avert his own.

Chiron|| had survived the smart
Of the hydra-tainted dart,
And Jove's bolt had been, with ease,
Foiled by Asclepiades.¶

Thou too, sage! of whom forlorn
Helicon and Cirrha** mourn,
Still hadst filled thy princely place,
Regent of the gownèd race:

Hadst advanced to higher fame
Still thy much ennobled name,
Nor in Charon's skiff explored
The Tartarean gulf abhorred.

* A centaur whom Hercules shot with a poisoned arrow. The hero was poisoned by the centaur's blood-stained robe, which he was induced to put on.

† Sarpedon.

‡ Circe and Medea were enchantresses.

§ Son of Esculapius. He was leech to the Greeks during the siege of Troy.

|| A centaur learned in medicine.

¶ Esculapius. He was killed by lightning.

** Delphi.

But resentful Proserpine,
Jealous of thy skill divine,
Snapping short thy vital thread,
Thee too numbered with the dead.

Wise and good! untroubled be
The green turf that covers thee!
Thence, in gay profusion, grow
All the sweetest flowers that blow!

Pluto's consort bid thee rest!
Æacus* pronounce thee blest!
To her home thy shade consign!
Make Elysium ever thine!

ON THE DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF ELY.†

My lids with grief were tumid yet,
And still my sullied cheek was wet
With briny dews, profusely shed
For venerable Winton dead;‡
When Fame, whose tales of saddest sound,
Alas! are ever truest found,
The news through all our cities spread
Of yet another mitred head
By ruthless fate to death consigned,
Ely, the honour of his kind!
At once a storm of passion heaved
My boiling bosom, much I grieved;
But more I raged, at every breath
Devoting Death himself to death.
With less revenge did Naso§ teem
When hated Ibis was his theme;
With less Archilochus|| denied
The lovely Greek his promised bride.
But lo! while thus I execrate
Incensed the minister of fate,
Wondrous accents, soft, yet clear,
Wafted on the gale I hear.
"Ah, much deluded! lay aside
Thy threats, and anger misapplied!

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* One of the judges of the dead.

† Nicholas Felton, Bishop of Ely.

‡ Dr. Felton died a few days after Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester.

§ Ovid.

|| A Greek poet. He was refused as a suitor to his daughter by Lycambes, and in revenge lampooned the whole family. Lycambes' daughters hanged themselves.

Art not afraid with sounds like these
To offend where thou canst not appease?
Death is not (wherefore dreamest thou thus?)
The son of night and Erebus:
Nor was of fell Erynnis born
On gulfs where Chaos rules forlorn.
But sent from God, His presence leaves,
To gather home His ripened sheaves,
To call encumbered souls away
From fleshly bonds to boundless day,
(As when the winged hours excite,
And summon forth the morning light)
And each to convoy to her place
Before the Eternal Father's face.
But not the wicked—them, severe
Yet just, from all their pleasures here
He hurries to the realms below,
Terrific realms of penal woe!
Myself no sooner heard His call,
Than, 'scaping through my prison wall,
I bade adieu to bolts and bars,
And soared, with angels, to the stars.
Like him of old, to whom 'twas given
To mount on fiery wheels to heaven.
Boötes' waggon,* slow with cold,
Appalled me not; nor to behold
The sword that vast Orion draws,
Or even the Scorpion's horrid claws.†
Beyond the sun's bright orb I fly,
And far beneath my feet descry
Night's dread goddess, seen with awe,
Whom her winged dragons draw.
Thus, ever wondering at my speed,
Augmented still as I proceed,
I pass the planetary sphere,
The milky way—and now appear
Heaven's crystal battlements, her door
Of massy pearl, and emerald floor.
"But here I cease. For never can
The tongue of once a mortal man
In suitable description trace
The pleasures of that happy place;
Suffice it, that those joys divine
Are all, and all for ever, mine!"

* The Great Bear.

† The constellations.

NATURE UNIMPAIRED BY TIME.

Ah, how the human mind wearies herself
With her own wanderings, and, involved in gloom
Impenetrable, speculates amiss!
Measuring in her folly things divine
By human; laws inscribed on adamant,
By laws of man's device, and counsels fixed
For ever, by the hours that pass and die.
How?—shall the face of Nature then be ploughed
Into deep wrinkles, and shall years at last
On the great parent fix a sterile curse?
Shall even she confess old age, and halt,
And, palsy-smitten, shake her starry brows?
Shall foul Antiquity with rust, and Drought
And Famine, vex the radiant worlds above?
Shall Time's unsated maw crave and ingulf
The very heavens that regulate his flight?
And was the Sire of All able to fence
His works, and to uphold the circling worlds,
But, through improvident and heedless haste,
Let slip the occasion?—so then—all is lost—
And in some future evil hour, yon arch
Shall crumble and come thundering down, the poles
Jar in collision, the Olympian king
Fall with his throne, and Pallas, holding forth
The terrors of the Gorgon shield* in vain,
Shall rush to the abyss, like Vulcan hurled
Down into Lemnos, through the gate of heaven.
Thou also, with precipitated wheels,
Phœbus! thy own son's fall† shall imitate,
With hideous ruin shall impress the deep
Suddenly, and the flood shall reek and hiss,
At the extinction of the lamp of day.
Then too shall Hæmus, cloven to his base,
Be shattered, and the huge Ceraunian hills,
Once weapons of Tartarean Dis, immersed
In Erebus, shall fill himself with fear.
No. The Almighty Father surer laid
His deep foundations, and, providing well
For the event of all, the scales of Fate
Suspended in just equipoise, and bade

* Minerva had the head of the Gorgon Medusa in her shield; it turned all who looked on it to stone.

† Phaeton, who fell from the chariot of the sun while driving it.

His universal works, from age to age,
One tenor hold, perpetual, undisturbed.
  Hence the prime mover wheels itself about
Continual, day by day, and with it bears
In social measure swift, the heavens around.
Not tardier now is Saturn than of old,
Nor radiant less the burning casque of Mars.
Phœbus, his vigour unimpaired, still shows
The effulgence of his youth, nor needs the god
A downward course, that he may warm the vales;
But, ever rich in influence, runs his road,
Sign after sign, through all the heavenly zone.
Beautiful, as at first, ascends the star*
From odoriferous Ind, whose office is
To gather home betimes the ethereal flock,
To pour them o'er the skies again at eve,
And to discriminate the night and day.
Still Cynthia's changeful horn waxes and wanes
Alternate, and with arms extended still
She welcomes to her breast her brother's beams.
Nor have the elements deserted yet
Their functions; thunder with as loud a stroke
As erst smites through the rocks and scatters them;
The east still howls; still the relentless north
Invades the shuddering Scythian, still he breathes
The winter, and still rolls the storms along;
The king of ocean, with his wonted force,
Beats on Pelorus;† o'er the deep is heard
The hoarse alarm of Triton's sounding shell;
Nor swim the monsters of th' Ægean sea
In shallows, or beneath diminished waves.
Thou too, thy ancient vegetative power
Enjoy'st, O Earth! Narcissus still is sweet;
And, Phœbus! still thy favourite, and still
Thy favourite, Cytherea,‡ both retain
Their beauty; nor the mountains, ore enriched
For punishment of man, with purer gold
Teemed ever, or with brighter gems the deep.
  Thus in unbroken series all proceeds;
And shall, till wide involving either pole,
And the immensity of yonder heaven,
The final flames of destiny absorb
The world, consumed in one enormous pyre!

* Venus. † North-east promontory of Sicily.
‡ The hyacinth, favourite of Apollo. The anemone, favourite of Venus.

ON THE PLATONIC IDEA AS IT WAS UNDERSTOOD BY ARISTOTLE.

Ye sister powers, who o'er the sacred groves
Preside, and thou, fair mother of them all,
Mnemosyne!* and thou who, in thy grot
Immense, reclined at leisure, hast in charge
The archives and the ordinances of Jove,
And dost record the festivals of heaven,
Eternity!—inform us who is He,
That great original by nature chosen
To be the archetype of human kind,
Unchangeable, immortal, with the poles
Themselves coeval, one, yet everywhere,
An image of the God who gave him being?
Twin-brother of the goddess born from Jove,†
He dwells not in his father's mind, but, though
Of common nature with ourselves, exists
Apart, and occupies a local home.
Whether, companion of the stars, he spend
Eternal ages, roaming at his will
From sphere to sphere the tenfold heavens, or dwell
On the moon's side that nearest neighbours earth,
Or torpid on the banks of Lethe‡ sit,
Among the multitude of souls ordained
To flesh and blood! or whether (as may chance)
That vast and giant model of our kind
In some far distant region of this globe
Sequestered stalk, with lifted head on high
O'ertowering Atlas, on whose shoulders rest
The stars, terrific even to the gods.
Never the Theban seer,§ whose blindness proved
His best illumination, him beheld
In secret vision; never him the son
Of Pleione,|| amid the noiseless night
Descending, to the prophet-choir revealed;
Him never knew the Assyrian priest,¶ who yet
The ancestry of Ninus chronicles,
And Belus, and Osiris, far renowned;
Nor even thrice great Hermes,** although skilled
So deep in mystery, to the worshippers
Of Isis showed a prodigy like him.

* Goddess of Memory and mother of the Muses. † Pallas.
‡ Waters of oblivion or forgetfulness. § Tiresias, already named.
|| Hermes or Mercury. ¶ Sanchoniathon.
** Hermes Trismegistus, the author of Neo-Platonic works much esteemed.

And thou,* who hast immortalized the shades
Of Academus, if the schools received
This monster of the fancy first from thee,
Either recall at once the banished bards
To thy republic, or thyself, evinced
A wilder fabulist, go also forth.

TO HIS FATHER.

Oh that Pieria's† spring would through my breast
Pour its inspiring influence, and rush
No rill, but rather an o'erflowing flood!
That, for my venerable father's sake
All meaner themes renounced, my Muse, on wings
Of duty borne, might reach a loftier strain.
For thee, my father! howsoe'er it please,
She frames this slender work; nor know I aught
That may thy gifts more suitably requite;
Though to requite them suitably would ask
Returns much nobler, and surpassing far
The meagre stores of verbal gratitude:
But, such as I possess, I send thee all.
This page presents thee in their full amount
With thy son's treasures, and the sum is nought;
Nought, save the riches from that airy dream
In secret grottos and in laurel bowers,
I have, by golden Clio's‡ gift, acquired.
Verse is a work divine; despise not thou
Verse therefore, which evinces (nothing more)
Man's heavenly source, and which, retaining still
Some scintillations of Promethean fire,
Bespeaks him animated from above.
The gods love verse; the infernal powers themselves
Confess the influence of verse, which stirs
The lowest deep, and binds in triple chains
Of adamant both Pluto and the shades.
In verse the Delphic priestess, and the pale
Tremulous Sibyl, make the future known;
And he who sacrifices, on the shrine
Hangs verse, both when he smites the threatening bull,
And when he spreads his reeking entrails wide
To scrutinise the fates enveloped there.
We too, ourselves, what time we seek again
Our native skies, and one eternal now
Shall be the only measure of our being,

* Plato.

† A fount sacred to the Muses. ‡ The Muse of History.

Crowned all with gold, and chanting to the lyre
Harmonious verse, shall range the courts above,
And make the starry firmament resound.
And, even now, the fiery spirit pure
That wheels yon circling orbs, directs himself
Their mazy dance with melody of verse
Unutterable, immortal, hearing which
Huge Ophiuchus* holds his hiss suppressed;
Orion, softened, drops his ardent blade,
And Atlas stands unconscious of his load.
Verse graced of old the feasts of kings, ere yet
Luxurious dainties, destined to the gulf
Immense of gluttony, were known, and ere
Lyæus† deluged yet the temperate board.
Then sat the bard a customary guest
To share the banquet, and, his length of locks
With beechen honours bound, proposed in verse
The characters of heroes, and their deeds
To imitation, sang of chaos old,
Of Nature's birth, of gods that crept in search
Of acorns fallen, and of the thunderbolt
Not yet produced from Ætna's fiery cave.
And what avails, at last, tune without voice,
Devoid of matter? Such may suit perhaps
The rural dance, but such was ne'er the song
Of Orpheus, whom the streams stood still to hear,
And the oaks followed. Not by chords alone
Well touched, but by resistless accents more
To sympathetic tears the ghosts themselves
He moved; these praises to his verse he owes.
  Nor thou persist, I pray thee, still to slight
The sacred Nine, and to imagine vain
And useless, powers, by whom inspired, thyself
Art skilful to associate verse with airs
Harmonious, and to give the human voice
A thousand modulations, heir by right
Indisputable of Arion's fame.‡
Now say, what wonder is it, if a son
Of thine delight in verse, if, so conjoined
In close affinity, we sympathise
In social arts and kindred studies sweet?
Such distribution of himself to us
Was Phœbus' choice; thou hast thy gift, and I
Mine also, and between us we receive,
Father and son, the whole inspiring God.

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* The Serpent, a constellation. † Bacchus.
‡ Milton's father was a fine musician.

No! howsoe'er the semblance thou assume
Of hate, thou hatest not the gentle Muse,
My father! for thou never bad'st me tread
The beaten path, and broad, that leads right on
To opulence, nor didst condemn thy son
To the insipid clamours of the bar,
To laws voluminous, and ill observed;
But, wishing to enrich me more, to fill
My mind with treasure, ledst me far away,
From city din to deep retreats, to banks
And streams Aonian, and, with free consent,
Didst place me happy at Apollo's side.
I speak not now, on more important themes
Intent, of common benefits, and such
As nature bids, but of thy larger gifts,
My father! who, when I had opened once
The stores of Roman rhetoric, and learned
The full toned language of the eloquent Greeks,
Whose lofty music graced the lips of Jove,
Thyself didst counsel me to add the flowers
That Gallia boasts; those too, with which the smooth
Italian his degenerate speech adorns,
That witnesses his mixture with the Goth;
And Palestine's prophetic songs divine.
To sum the whole, whate'er the heaven contains,
The earth beneath it, and the air between,
The rivers and the restless deep, may all
Prove intellectual gain to me, my wish
Concurring with thy will; science herself,
All cloud removed, inclines her beauteous head,
And offers me the lip, if, dull of heart,
I shrink not, and decline her gracious boon.
Go now, and gather dross, ye sordid minds,
That covet it; what could my father more?
What more could Jove himself, unless he gave
His own abode, the heaven in which he reigns?
More eligible gifts than these were not
Apollo's to his son, had they been safe
As they were insecure, who made the boy
The world's vice-luminary, bade him rule
The radiant chariot of the day, and bind
To his young brows his own all-dazzling wreath.
I therefore, although last and least, my place
Among the learned in the laurel grove
Will hold, and where the conqueror's ivy twines,
Henceforth exempt from the unlettered throng
Profane, nor even to be seen by such.
Away then, sleepless Care, Complaint, away,

And Envy, with thy "jealous leer malign!"
Nor let the monster Calumny shoot forth
Her venomed tongue at me. Detested foes!
Ye all are impotent against my peace,
For I am privileged, and bear my breast
Safe, and too high, for your viperean wound.
But thou! my father, since to render thanks
Equivalent, and to requite by deeds
Thy liberality, exceeds my power,
Suffice it, that I thus record thy gifts,
And bear them treasured in a grateful mind!
Ye, too, the favourite pastime of my youth,
My voluntary numbers, if ye dare
To hope longevity, and to survive
Your master's funeral, not soon absorbed
In the oblivious Lethæan gulf,
Shall to futurity perhaps convey
This theme, and by these praises of my sire
Improve the fathers of a distant age!

TO SALSILLUS, A ROMAN POET, MUCH INDISPOSED.

The original is written in a measure called Scazon, which signifies limping, and the measure is so denominated, because, though in other respects Iambic, it terminates with a Spondee, and has, consequently, a more tardy movement.

The reader will immediately see that this property of the Latin verse cannot be imitated in English.

My halting Muse, that dragg'st by choice along
Thy slow, slow step, in melancholy song,
And lik'st that pace, expressive of thy cares,
Not less than Deiopeia's* sprightlier airs,
When in the dance she beats with measured tread
Heaven's floor, in front of Juno's golden bed;
Salute Salsillus, who to verse divine
Prefers, with partial love, such lays as mine.
Thus writes that Milton, then, who, wafted o'er
From his own nest on Albion's stormy shore,
Where Eurus, fiercest of the Æolian band,
Sweeps with ungoverned rage the blasted land,
Of late to more serene Ausonia came
To view her cities of illustrious name,
To prove, himself a witness of the truth,
How wise her elders, and how learn'd her youth.
Much good, Salsillus! and a body free
From all disease, that Milton asks for thee,

* One of Juno's nymphs.

Who now endur'st the languor and the pains
That bile inflicts, diffused through all thy veins;
Relentless malady, not moved to spare
By thy sweet Roman voice and Lesbian air!
Health, Hebe's sister, sent us from the skies,
And thou, Apollo, whom all sickness flies,
Pythius, or Pæan, or what name divine
Soe'er thou choose, haste, heal a priest of thine!
Ye groves of Faunus, and ye hills that melt
With vinous dews, where meek Evander dwelt!*
If aught salubrious in your confines grow,
Strive which shall soonest heal your poet's woe,
That, rendered to the Muse he loves, again
He may enchant the meadows with his strain.
Numa, reclined in everlasting ease
Amid the shade of dark embowering trees,
Viewing with eyes of unabated fire
His loved Ægeria, shall that strain admire:
So soothed, the tumid Tiber shall revere
The tombs of kings, nor desolate the year,
Shall curb his waters with a friendly rein,
And guide them harmless, till they meet the main.

TO GIOVANNI BATTISTA MANSO,

MARQUIS OF VILLA.

MILTON'S ACCOUNT OF MANSO.

Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa, is an Italian nobleman of the highest estimation among his countrymen, for genius, literature, and military accomplishments. To him Torquato Tasso addressed his dialogues on Friendship, for he was much the friend of Tasso, who has also celebrated him among the other princes of his country, in his poem entitled, Gerusalemme Conquistata, book xx.

Fra cavalier magnanimi, e cortesi,
Risplende il Manso.

During the Author's stay at Naples he received at the hands of the Marquis a thousand kind offices and civilities, and desirous not to appear ungrateful, sent him this poem a short time before his departure from that city.

These verses also to thy praise, the Nine,
O Manso! happy in that theme, design,
For, Gallus and Mæcenas gone, they see
None such besides, or whom they love as thee;

* The Aventine hill. For "Evander," see page 491.

And if my verse may give the meed of fame,
Thine too shall prove an everlasting name.
Already such, it shines in Tasso's page
(For thou wast Tasso's friend) from age to age,
And, next, the Muse consigned (not unaware
How high the charge) Marino to thy care,
Who, singing to the nymphs Adonis' praise,
Boasts thee the patron of his copious lays.
To thee alone the poet would entrust
His latest vows, to thee alone his dust;
And thou with punctual piety hast paid,
In laboured brass, thy tribute to his shade.
Nor this contented thee—but lest the grave
Should aught absorb of theirs which thou couldst save,
All future ages thou hast deigned to teach
The life, lot, genius, character of each,
Eloquent as the Carian sage, who, true
To his great theme, the life of Homer drew.
  I, therefore, though a stranger youth, who come,
Chilled by rude blasts that freeze my northern home,
Thee, dear to Clio, confident proclaim,
And thine, for Phœbus' sake, a deathless name.
Nor thou, so kind, wilt view with scornful eye
A muse scarce reared beneath our sullen sky
Who fears not, indiscreet as she is young,
To seek in Latium hearers of her song.
We too, where Thames with its unsullied waves
The tresses of the blue-haired Ocean laves,
Hear oft, by night, or, slumbering, seem to hear,
O'er his wide stream, the swan's voice warbling clear;
And we could boast a Tityrus* of yore
Who trod, a welcome guest, your happy shore.
  Yes—dreary as we own our northern clime,
Even we to Phœbus raise the polished rhyme,
We too serve Phœbus; Phœbus has received
(If legends old may claim to be believed)
No sordid gifts from us, the golden ear,
The burnished apple, ruddiest of the year,
The fragrant crocus, and, to grace his fane,
Fair damsels chosen from the Druid train;
Druids, our native bards in ancient time,
Who gods and heroes praised in hallowed rhyme!
Hence, often as the maids of Greece surround
Apollo's shrine with hymns of festive sound,
They name the virgins who arrived of yore
With British offerings on the Delian shore,

* Chaucer, called in Spenser's Pastorals Tityrus.

Loxo,* from giant Corineus sprung,
Upis,† on whose blest lips the future hung,
And Hecaerge, with the golden hair,
All decked with Pictish hues, and all with bosoms bare.
Thou, therefore, happy sage, whatever clime
Shall ring with Tasso's praise in after time,
Or with Marino's, shalt be known their friend,
And with an equal flight to fame ascend.
The world shall hear how Phœbus and the Nine
Were inmates once, and willing guests of thine.
Yet Phœbus, when of old constrained to roam
The earth, an exile from his heavenly home,
Entered, no willing guest, Admetus' door,‡
Though Hercules had ventured there before.
But gentle Chiron's cave was near, a scene
Of rural peace, clothed with perpetual green,
And thither, oft as respite he required
From rustic clamours loud, the god retired.
There, many a time, on Peneus' bank reclined
At some oak's root with ivy thick entwined,
Won by his hospitable friend's desire,
He soothed his pains of exile with the lyre.
Then shook the hills, then trembled Peneus' shore,
Nor Œta felt his load of forest more;
The upland elms descended to the plain,
And softened lynxes wondered at that strain
Well may we think, O dear to all above!
Thy birth distinguished by the smile of Jove,
And that Apollo shed his kindliest power,
And Maia's son,§ on that propitious hour,
Since only minds so born can comprehend
A poet's worth, or yield that worth a friend.
Hence on thy yet unfaded cheek appears
The lingering freshness of thy greener years;
Hence in thy front and features we admire
Nature unwithered and a mind entire.
Oh! might so true a friend to me belong,
So skilled to grace the votaries of song,
Should I recall hereafter into rhyme
The kings and heroes of my native clime,
Arthur the chief, who even now prepares,
In subterraneous being, future wars,
With all his martial knights, to be restored
Each to his seat around the federal board;

* One of the British maidens who brought offerings to Apollo. † A Druidical prophetess.
‡ Admetus was king of Thessaly. Apollo was for a year his shepherd.
§ Hermes.

And Oh! if spirit fail me not, disperse
Our Saxon plunderers in triumphant verse!
Then, after all, when, with the past content,
A life I finish, not in silence spent;
Should he, kind mourner, o'er my deathbed bend,
I shall but need to say—"Be yet my friend!"
He, too, perhaps, shall bid the marble breathe
To honour me, and with the graceful wreath,
Or of Parnassus or the Paphian isle,
Shall bind my brows—but I shall rest the while.
Then, also, if the fruits of faith endure,
And virtue's promised recompense be sure,
Borne to those seats to which the blessed aspire
By purity of soul and virtuous fire,
These rites, as Fate permits, I shall survey
With eyes illumined by celestial day,
And, every cloud from my pure spirit driven,
Joy in the bright beatitude of heaven!

ON THE DEATH OF DAMON.

THE ARGUMENT.

Thyrsis and Damon, shepherds and neighbours, had always pursued the same studies, and had, from their earliest days, been united in the closest friendship. Thyrsis, while travelling for improvement, received intelligence of the death of Damon, and, after a time, returning and finding it true, deplores himself, and his solitary condition, in this poem.

By Damon is to be understood Charles Diodati, connected with the Italian city of Lucca by his father's side, in other respects an Englishman; a youth of uncommon genius, erudition, and virtue.

Ye nymphs of Himera,* (for ye have shed
Erewhile for Daphnis, and for Hylas dead,
And over Bion's long-lamented bier,
The fruitless meed of many a sacred tear)
Now through the villas laved by Thames rehearse
The woes of Thyrsis in Sicilian verse,
What sighs he heaved, and how with groans profound
He made the woods and hollow rocks resound,
Young Damon dead; nor even ceased to pour
His lonely sorrows at the midnight hour.
The green wheat twice had nodded in the ear,
And golden harvest twice enriched the year,
Since Damon's lips had gasped for vital air
The last, last time, nor Thyrsis yet was there;

* In Sicily

For he, enamoured of the muse, remained
In Tuscan Fiorenza long detained,
But, stored at length with all he wished to learn,
For his flock's sake now hasted to return;
And when the shepherd had resumed his seat
At the elm's root, within his old retreat,
Then 'twas his lot, then, all his loss to know,
And from his burthened heart he vented thus his woe:
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Alas! what deities shall I suppose
In heaven, or earth, concerned for human woes,
Since, oh my Damon! their severe decree
So soon condemns me to regret of thee!
Depart'st thou thus, thy virtues unrepaid
With fame and honour, like a vulgar shade?
Let him forbid it whose bright rod controls,
And separates sordid from illustrious souls;
Drives far the rabble, and to thee assign
A happier lot with spirits worthy thine!
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Whate'er befall, unless by cruel chance
The wolf first give me a forbidding glance,
Thou shalt not moulder undeplored, but long
Thy praise shall dwell on every shepherd's tongue.
To Daphnis first they shall delight to pay,
And, after him, to thee, the votive lay,
While Pales shall the flocks and pastures love,
Or Faunus to frequent the field or grove;
At least, if ancient piety and truth,
With all the learned labours of thy youth,
May serve thee aught, or to have left behind
A sorrowing friend, and of the tuneful kind.
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Yes, Damon! such thy sure reward shall be;
But ah, what doom awaits unhappy me?
Who, now, my pains and perils shall divide,
As thou wast wont, for ever at my side,
Both when the rugged frost annoyed our feet,
And when the herbage all was parched with heat;
Whether the grim wolf's ravage to prevent,
Or the huge lion's, armed with darts we went?
Whose converse now shall calm my stormy day,
With charming song who now beguile my way?
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.

In whom shall I confide? Whose counsel find
A balmy medicine for my troubled mind?
Or whose discourse with innocent delight
Shall fill me now, and cheat the wintry night,
While hisses on my hearth the pulpy pear,
And blackening chestnuts start and crackle there,
While storms abroad the dreary meadows whelm,
And the wind thunders through the neighbouring elm.
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Or who, when summer suns their summit reach,
And Pan sleeps hidden by the sheltering beech,
When shepherds disappear, nymphs seek the sedge,
And the stretched rustic snores beneath the hedge,
Who then shall render me thy pleasant vein
Of Attic wit, thy jests, thy smiles, again?
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Where glens and vales are thickest overgrown
With tangled boughs, I wander now alone,
Till night descend, while blustering wind and shower
Beat on my temples through the shattered bower.
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Alas! what rampant weeds now shame my fields,
And what a mildewed crop the furrow yields;
My rambling vines, unwedded to the trees,
Bear shrivelled grapes; my myrtles fail to please;
Nor please me more my flocks: they, slighted, turn
Their unavailing looks on me, and mourn.
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Ægon invites me to the hazel grove,
Amyntas, on the river's bank to rove,
And young Alphesibœus to a seat
Where branching elms exclude the midday heat.
'Here fountains spring—here mossy hillocks rise;
Here zephyr whispers, and the stream replies.'—
Thus each persuades, but, deaf to every call,
I gain the thickets, and escape them all.
"Go, seek your home, my lambs; my thoughts are due
To other cares than those of feeding you.
Then Mopsus said, (the same who reads so well
The voice of birds, and what the stars foretell,
For he by chance had noticed my return)
'What means thy sullen mood, this deep concern;
Ah, Thyrsis! thou art either crazed with love,
Or some sinister influence from above;

Dull Saturn's influence oft the shepherds rue;
His leaden shaft oblique has pierced thee through,'
"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are,
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
The nymphs amazed, my melancholy see,
And, 'Thyrsis!' cry—'what will become of thee?
What wouldst thou, Thyrsis? such should not appear
The brow of youth, stern, gloomy, and severe;
Brisk youth should laugh and love—ah, shun the fate
Of those, twice wretched mopes! who love too late!'
"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Ægle with Hyas came, to soothe my pain,
And Baucis' daughter, Dryope the vain,
Fair Dryope, for voice and finger neat
Known far and near, and for her self-conceit;
Chloris too came, whose cottage on the lands
That skirt the Idumanian current stands;
But all in vain they came, and but to see
Kind words, and comfortable, lost on me.
"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Ah blest indifference of the playful herd,
None by his fellow chosen, or preferred!
No bonds of amity the flocks inthral,
But each associates, and is pleased with all:
So graze the dappled deer in numerous droves,
And all his kind alike the zebra loves;
The same law governs where the billows roar,
And Proteus' shoals o'erspread the desert shore;
The sparrow, meanest of the feathered race,
His fit companion finds in every place,
With whom he picks the grain that suits him best,
Flirts here and there, and late returns to rest,
And whom, if chance the falcon make his prey,
Or hedger with his well-aimed arrow slay,
For no such loss the gay survivor grieves,
New love he seeks, and new delight receives.
We only, an obdurate kind, rejoice,
Scorning all others, in a single choice.
We scarce in thousands meet one kindred mind,
And if the long-sought good at last we find,
When least we fear it, Death our treasure steals,
And gives our heart a wound that nothing heals.
"Go, go, my lambs, unpastured as ye are;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Ah, what delusion lured me from my flocks,
To traverse Alpine snows and rugged rocks!

What need so great had I to visit Rome,
Now sunk in ruins, and herself a tomb?
Or, had she flourished still, as when, of old,
For her sake Tityrus forsook his fold,
What need so great had I to incur a pause
Of thy sweet intercourse for such a cause,
For such a cause to place the roaring sea,
Rocks, mountains, woods, between my friend and me?
Else, had I grasped thy feeble hand, composed
Thy decent limbs, thy drooping eyelids closed,
And, at the last, had said—'Farewell—ascend—
Nor even in the skies forget thy friend!'
"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Although well pleased, ye tuneful Tuscan swains!
My mind the memory of your worth retains,
Yet not your worth can teach me less to mourn
My Damon lost.—He too was Tuscan born,
Born in your Lucca, city of renown!
And wit possessed, and genius, like your own.
Oh how elate was I, when stretched beside
The murmuring course of Arno's breezy tide,
Beneath the poplar grove I passed my hours,
Now cropping myrtles, and now vernal flowers,
And hearing, as I lay at ease along,
Your swains contending for the prize of song!
I also dared attempt (and, as it seems,
Not much displeased attempting) various themes,
For even I can presents boast from you,
The shepherd's pipe, and osier basket too,
And Dati, and Francini, both have made
My name familiar to the beechen shade,
And they are learned, and each in every place
Renowned for song, and both of Lydian race.
"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
While bright the dewy grass with moonbeams shone,
And I stood hurdling in my kids alone,
How often have I said (but thou hadst found
Ere then thy dark cold lodgment underground)
Now Damon sings, or springes sets for hares,
Or wickerwork for various use prepares!
How oft, indulging fancy, have I planned
New scenes of pleasure that I hoped at hand,
Called thee abroad as I was wont, and cried—
'What, hoa! my friend—come, lay thy task aside
Haste, let us forth together, and beguile
The heat beneath yon whispering shades awhile,

Or on the margin stray of Colne's clear flood,
Or where Cassibelan's* gray turrets stood!
There thou shalt cull me simples, and shalt teach
Thy friend the name and healing powers of each,
From the tall bluebell to the dwarfish weed,
What the dry land, and what the marshes breed,
For all their kinds alike to thee are known,
And the whole art of Galen is thy own.'
Ah, perish Galen's art, and withered be
The useless herbs that gave not health to thee!
Twelve evenings since, as in poetic dream
I meditating sat some statelier theme,
The reeds no sooner touched my lip, though new,
And unessayed before, than wide they flew,
Bursting their waxen bands, nor could sustain
The deep-toned music of the solemn strain;
And I am vain perhaps, but I will tell
How proud a theme I chose—ye groves, farewell!
"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
Of Brutus, Dardan chief, my song shall be,
How with his barks he ploughed the British sea,
First from Rutupia's towering headland seen,
And of his consort's reign, fair Imogen;
Of Brennus and Belinus, brothers bold,
And of Arviragus, and how of old
Our hardy sires the Armorican controlled;
And of the wife of Gorloïs,† who, surprised
By Uther, in her husband's form disguised,
(Such was the force of Merlin's art) became
Pregnant with Arthur of heroic fame.
These themes I now revolve—and oh! if Fate
Proportion to these themes my lengthened date,
Adieu my shepherd's reed—yon pine tree bough
Shall be thy future home, there dangle thou
Forgotten and disused, unless ere long
Thou change thy Latian for a British song:
A British?—even so—the powers of man
Are bounded; little is the most he can;
And it shall well suffice me, and shall be
Fame and proud recompense enough for me,
If Usa,‡ golden-haired, my verse may learn,
If Alain bending o'er his crystal urn,
Swift-whirling Abra, Trent's o'ershadowed stream,
Thames, lovelier far than all in my esteem,

* St. Albans. † Iogérne.
‡ The Ouse. The *Alain* is the Alne. The *Abra*, the Humber.

Tamar's ore-tinctured flood, and, after these,
The wave-worn shores of utmost Orcades.
"Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare!
My thoughts are all now due to other care.
All this I kept in leaves of laurel rind
Enfolded safe, and for thy view designed,
This—and a gift from Manso's hand beside,
(Manso, not least his native city's pride)
Two cups that radiant as their giver shone,
Adorned by sculpture with a double zone.
The spring was graven there; here slowly wind
The Red Sea shores with groves of spices lined;
Her plumes of various hues amid the boughs
The sacred, solitary phœnix shows,
And, watchful of the dawn, reverts her head
To see Aurora leave her watery bed.
—In other part, the expansive vault above,
And there too, even there, the god of love;
With quiver armed he mounts, his torch displays
A vivid light, his gem-tipped arrows blaze,
Around his bright and fiery eyes he rolls,
Nor aims at vulgar minds or little souls,
Nor deigns one look below, but, aiming high,
Sends every arrow to the lofty sky;
Hence forms divine, and minds immortal, learn
The power of Cupid, and enamoured burn.
"Thou also Damon, (neither need I fear
That hope delusive) thou art also there;
For whither should simplicity like thine
Retire? where else such spotless virtue shine?
Thou dwell'st not (thought profane) in shades below,
Nor tears suit thee—cease then, my tears, to flow.
Away with grief; on Damon ill bestowed!
Who, pure himself, has found a pure abode,
Has passed the showery arch, henceforth resides
With saints and heroes, and from flowing tides
Quaffs copious immortality and joy
With hallowed lips!—Oh! blest without alloy,
And now enriched with all that faith can claim,
Look down, entreated by whatever name,
If Damon please thee most (that rural sound
Shall oft with echoes fill the groves around)
Or if Deodatus, by which alone
In those ethereal mansions thou art known.
Thy blush was maiden, and thy youth the taste
Of wedded bliss knew never, pure and chaste.
The honours, therefore, by divine decree
The lot of virgin worth, are given to thee:

Thy brows encircled with a radiant band,
And the green palm branch waving in thy hand,
Thou in immortal nuptials shalt rejoice,
And join with seraphs thy according voice,
Where rapture reigns, and the ecstatic lyre
Guides the blest orgies of the blazing quire."

AN ODE ADDRESSED TO MR. JOHN ROUS,

LIBRARIAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

ON A LOST VOLUME OF MY POEMS, WHICH HE DESIRED ME TO REPLACE, THAT HE MIGHT ADD THEM TO MY OTHER WORKS DEPOSITED IN THE LIBRARY.

This ode is rendered without rhyme, that it might more adequately represent the original, which, as Milton himself informs us, is of no certain measure. It may possibly for this reason disappoint the reader, though it cost the writer more labour than the translation of any other piece in the whole collection.—C.

STROPHE.

My twofold book! single in show,
But double in contents,
Neat, but not curiously adorned,
Which, in his early youth,
A poet gave, no lofty one in truth,
Although an earnest wooer of the Muse—
Say while in cool Ausonian shades
Or British wilds he roamed,
Striking by turns his native lyre,
By turns the Daunian* lute,
And stepped almost in air—

ANTISTROPHE.

Say, little book, what furtive hand
Thee from thy fellow books conveyed,
What time, at the repeated suit
Of my most learned friend,
I sent thee forth, an honoured traveller,
From our great city to the source of Thames,
Cærulean sire!
Where rise the fountains, and the raptures ring,
Of the Aonian choir,

* Italian

Durable as yonder spheres,
And through the endless lapse of years
Secure to be admired?

STROPHE II.

Now what god, or demigod,
For Britain's ancient genius moved,
(If our afflicted land
Have expiated at length the guilty sloth
Of her degenerate sons)
Shall terminate our impious feuds,
And discipline with hallowed voice recall?
Recall the Muses too,
Driven from their ancient seats
In Albion, and well nigh from Albion's shore,
And with keen Phœbean shafts
Piercing the unseemly birds,
Whose talons menace us,
Shall drive the harpy race from Helicon afar?

ANTISTROPHE.

But thou, my book, though thou hast strayed,
Whether by treachery lost,
Or indolent neglect, thy bearer's fault,
From all thy kindred books,
To some dark cell or cave forlorn,
Where thou endurest, perhaps,
The chafing of some hard untutored hand,
Be comforted—
For lo! again the splendid hope appears
That thou mayst yet escape
The gulfs of Lethe, and on oary wings
Mount to the everlasting courts of Jove!

STROPHE III.

Since Rous desires thee, and complains
That, though by promise his,
Thou yet appear'st not in thy place
Among the literary noble stores
Given to his care,
But, absent, leav'st his numbers incomplete,
He, therefore, guardian vigilant
Of that unperishing wealth,
Calls thee to the interior shrine, his charge,
Where he intends a richer treasure far

Than Iön kept (Iön,* Erectheus' son
Illustrious, of the fair Creüsa born)
In the resplendent temple of his god,
Tripods of gold, and Delphic gifts divine.

ANTISTROPHE.

Haste, then, to the pleasant groves,
The Muses' favourite haunt;
Resume thy station in Apollo's dome,
Dearer to him
Than Delos, or the forked Parnassian hill!
Exulting go,
Since now a splendid lot is also thine,
And thou art sought by my propitious friend
For there thou shalt be read
With authors of exalted note,
The ancient glorious lights of Greece and Rome.

EPODE.

Ye, then, my works, no longer vain
And worthless deemed by me!
Whate'er this sterile genius has produced,
Expect, at last, the rage of envy spent,
An unmolested happy home,
Gift of kind Hermes, and my watchful friend,
Where never flippant tongue profane
Shall entrance find,
And whence the coarse unlettered multitude
Shall babble far remote.
Perhaps some future distant age,
Less tinged with prejudice, and better taught,
Shall furnish minds of power
To judge more equally.
Then, Malice silenced in the tomb,
Cooler heads and sounder hearts,
Thanks to Rous, if aught of praise
I merit, shall with candour weigh the claim.

* Iön kept the treasures in the Temple of Delphi.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE ITALIAN POEMS.

SONNET.

Fair Lady! whose harmonious name the Rhine,*
Through all his grassy vale, delights to hear,
Base were indeed the wretch who could forbear
To love a spirit elegant as thine,
That manifests a sweetness all divine,
Nor knows a thousand winning acts to spare,
And graces, which Love's bow and arrows are,
Tempering thy virtues to a softer shine.
When gracefully thou speak'st, or singest gay,
Such strains as might the senseless forest move,
Ah then—turn each his eyes and ears away,
Who feels himself unworthy of thy love!
Grace can alone preserve him ere the dart
Of fond desire yet reach his inmost heart.

SONNET.

As on a hill-top rude, when closing day
Imbrowns the scene, some pastoral maiden fair
Waters a lovely foreign plant with care,
Borne from its native genial airs away,
That scarcely can its tender bud display,
So, on my tongue these accents, new and rare,
Are flowers exotic, which Love waters there.
While thus, O sweetly scornful! I essay
Thy praise in verse to British ears unknown,
And Thames exchange for Arno's fair domain;
So Love has willed, and ofttimes Love has shown
That what he wills, he never wills in vain.
Oh that this hard and sterile breast might be
To Him, who plants from Heaven, a soil as free.

CANZONE.

They mock my toil—the nymphs and amorous swains—
"And whence this fond attempt to write," they cry,
"Love-songs in language that thou little know'st?
How dar'st thou risk to sing these foreign strains?

* In the original "Rheno." Perhaps the Reno, Masson thinks, which flows near Bologna.

Say truly. Find'st not oft thy purpose crossed,
And that thy fairest flowers here fade and die?"
Then, with pretence of admiration high—
"Thee other shores expect, and other tides,
Rivers, on whose grassy sides
Her deathless laurel leaf, with which to bind
Thy flowing locks, already Fame provides;
Why then this burthen, better far declined?"
Speak, Muse! for me—the fair one said, who guides
My willing heart, and all my fancy's flights,
"This is the language in which Love delights."

SONNET, TO CHARLES DIODATI.

Charles—and I say it wondering—thou must know
That I, who once assumed a scornful air
And scoffed at Love, am fallen in his snare,
(Full many an upright man has fallen so:)
Yet think me not thus dazzled by the flow
Of golden locks, or damask cheek; more rare
The heartfelt beauties of my foreign fair;
A mien majestic, with dark brows that show
The tranquil lustre of a lofty mind;
Words exquisite, of idioms more than one,
And song, whose fascinating power might bind,
And from her sphere draw down, the labouring moon;
With such fire-darting eyes that, should I fill
My ears with wax, she would enchant me still.

SONNET.

Lady! It cannot be but that thine eyes
Must be my sun, such radiance they display,
And strike me even as Phœbus him whose way
Through horrid Libya's sandy desert lies.
Meantime, on that side steamy vapours rise
Where most I suffer. Of what kind are they,
New as to me they are, I cannot say,
But deem them, in the lover's language—sighs.
Some, though with pain, my bosom close conceals,
Which, if in part escaping thence, they tend
To soften thine, thy coldness soon congeals.
While others to my tearful eyes ascend,
Whence my sad nights in showers are ever drowned,
Till my Aurora comes, her brow with roses bound.

SONNET.

Enamoured, artless, young, on foreign ground,
Uncertain whither from myself to fly;
To thee, dear lady, with an humble sigh
Let me devote my heart, which I have found
By certain proofs, not few, intrepid, sound,
Good, and addicted to conceptions high:
When tempests shake the world, and fire the sky,
It rests in adamant self-wrapt around,
As safe from envy, and from outrage rude,
From hopes and fears that vulgar minds abuse,
As fond of genius, and fixed fortitude,
Of the resounding lyre, and every Muse.
Weak you will find it in one only part,
Now pierced by Love's immedicable dart.

TRANSLATION OF A SIMILE IN PARADISE LOST.

"As when, from mountain-tops, the dusky clouds
Ascending," &c.—Book ii. l. 488.

Quales aërii montis de vertice nubes
Cum surgunt, et jam Boreæ tumida ora quièrunt,
Cœlum hilares abdit, spissâ caligine, vultus:
Tum si jucundo tandem sol prodeat ore,
Et croceo montes et pascua lumine tingat,
Gaudent omnia, aves mulcent concentibus agros,
Balatuque ovium colles vallesque resultant.

TRANSLATION OF DRYDEN'S EPIGRAM ON MILTON.

(July, 1780.)

Tres tria, sed longè distantia, sæcula vates
Ostentant tribus è gentibus eximios.
Græcia sublimem, cum majestate disertum
Roma tulit, felix Anglia utrique parem.
Partubus ex binis Natura exhausta, coacta est,
Tertius ut fieret. consociare duos.

TRANSLATIONS FROM VINCENT BOURNE.*

THE THRACIAN.

THRACIAN parents, at his birth,
Mourn their babe with many a tear,
But with undissembled mirth
Place him breathless on his bier.

Greece and Rome with equal scorn,
"O the savages!" exclaim,
"Whether they rejoice or mourn,
Well entitled to the name!"

But the cause of this concern,
And this pleasure, would they trace,
Even they might somewhat learn
From the savages of Thrace.

RECIPROCAL KINDNESS THE PRIMARY LAW OF NATURE.

ANDROCLES, from his injured lord, in dread
Of instant death, to Libya's desert fled.
Tired with his toilsome flight, and parched with heat,
He spied at length a cavern's cool retreat;
But scarce had given to rest his weary frame,
When, hugest of his kind, a lion came:
He roared approaching: but the savage din
To plaintive murmurs changed—arrived within,
And with expressive looks, his lifted paw
Presenting, aid implored from whom he saw.
The fugitive, through terror at a stand,
Dared not awhile afford his trembling hand;
But bolder grown, at length inherent found
A pointed thorn, and drew it from the wound.
The cure was wrought; he wiped the sanious blood,
And firm and free from pain the lion stood.
Again he seeks the wilds, and day by day
Regales his inmate with the parted prey.
Nor he disdains the dole, though unprepared,
Spread on the ground, and with a lion shared.
But thus to live—still lost—sequestered still—
Scarce seemed his lord's revenge a heavier ill.

* Vincent Bourne was usher of the fifth form at Westminster when Cowper was in it. He is known now as an excellent Latin poet.

Home! native home! Oh might he but repair!
He must—he will, though death attends him there.
He goes, and doomed to perish, on the sands
Of the full theatre unpitied stands:
When lo! the selfsame lion from his cage
Flies to devour him, famished into rage.
He flies, but viewing in his purposed prey
The man, his healer, pauses on his way,
And, softened by remembrance into sweet
And kind composure, crouches at his feet.
Mute with astonishment, the assembly gaze:
But why, ye Romans? Whence your mute amaze?
All this is natural: Nature bade him rend
An enemy; she bids him spare a friend.

A MANUAL,

MORE ANCIENT THAN THE ART OF PRINTING, AND NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY CATALOGUE.

THERE is a book, which we may call
(Its excellence is such)
Alone a library, though small;
The ladies thumb it much.

Words none, things numerous it contains:
And things with words compared,
Who needs be told, that has his brains,
Which merits most regard?

Ofttimes its leaves of scarlet hue
A golden edging boast;
And opened, it displays to view
Twelve pages at the most.

Nor name nor title, stamped behind,
Adorns its outer part;
But all within 'tis richly lined,
A magazine of art.

The whitest hands that secret hoard
Oft visit: and the fair
Preserve it in their bosoms stored,
As with a miser's care.

Thence implements of every size,
And formed for various use,
(They need but to consult their eyes)
They readily produce.

The largest and the longest kind
Possess the foremost page,
A sort most needed by the blind,
Or nearly such from age.

The full charged leaf, which next ensues,
Presents in bright array
The smaller sort, which matrons use,
Not quite so blind as they.

The third, the fourth, the fifth supply
What their occasions ask,
Who with a more discerning eye
Perform a nicer task.

But still with regular decrease
From size to size they fall,
In every leaf grow less and less;
The last are least of all.

Oh! what a fund of genius, pent
In narrow space is here!
This volume's method and intent
How luminous and clear.

It leaves no reader at a loss
Or posed, whoever reads:
No commentator's tedious gloss,
Nor even index needs.

Search Bodley's many thousands o'er!
No book is treasured there,
Nor yet in Granta's numerous store,
That may with this compare.

No!—rival none in either host
Of this was ever seen,
Or, that contents could justly boast
So brilliant and so keen.

AN ENIGMA.

A NEEDLE, small as small can be,
In bulk and use surpasses me,
Nor is my purchase dear;
For little, and almost for nought,
As many of my kind are bought
As days are in the year.

Yet though but little use we boast,
And are procured at little cost,
The labour is not light;
Nor few artificers it asks,
All skilful in their several tasks,
To fashion us aright.

One fuses metal o'er the fire,
A second draws it into wire,
The sheers another plies,
Who clips in length the brazen thread
For him who, chafing every shred
Gives all an equal size.

A fifth prepares, exact and round,
The knob with which it must be crowned;
'His follower makes it fast:
And with his mallet and his file
To shape the point, employs awhile
The seventh and the last.

Now therefore, Œdipus! declare
What creature, wonderful, and rare,
A process that obtains
Its purpose with so much ado
At last produces!—tell me true,
And take me for your pains!

SPARROWS SELF-DOMESTICATED IN TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

None ever shared the social feast,
Or as an inmate or a guest,
Beneath the celebrated dome
Where once Sir Isaac had his home,
Who saw not (and with some delight
Perhaps he viewed the novel sight)
How numerous, at the tables there,
The sparrows beg their daily fare.
For there, in every nook and cell
Where such a family may dwell,
Sure as the vernal season comes
Their nest they weave in hope of crumbs,
Which kindly given, may serve with food
Convenient their unfeathered brood;
And oft as with its summons clear
The warning bell salutes their ear,

Sagacious listeners to the sound,
They flock from all the fields around,
To reach the hospitable hall,
None more attentive to the call.
Arrived, the pensionary band,
Hopping and chirping, close at hand,
Solicit what they soon receive,
The sprinkled, plenteous donative.
Thus is a multitude, though large,
Supported at a trivial charge:
A single doit would overpay
The expenditure of every day,
And who can grudge so small a grace
To suppliants, natives of the place?

FAMILIARITY DANGEROUS.

As in her ancient mistress' lap
The youthful tabby lay,
They gave each other many a tap,
Alike disposed to play.

But strife ensues. Puss waxes warm,
And with protruded claws
Ploughs all the length of Lydia's arm,
Mere wantonness the cause.

At once, resentful of the deed,
She shakes her to the ground
With many a threat that she shall bleed
With still a deeper wound.

But, Lydia, bid thy fury rest:
It was a venial stroke:
For she that will with kittens jest,
Should bear a kitten's joke.

INVITATION TO THE REDBREAST.

Sweet bird, whom the winter constrains—
And seldom another it can—
To seek a retreat while he reigns
In the well sheltered dwellings of man,
Who never can seem to intrude,
Though in all places equally free,
Come, oft as the season is rude,
Thou art sure to be welcome to me.

At sight of the first feeble ray
That pierces the clouds of the east,
To inveigle thee every day
My windows shall show thee a feast;
For, taught by experience, I know
Thee mindful of benefit long,
And that, thankful for all I bestow,
Thou wilt pay me with many a song.

Then, soon as the swell of the buds
Bespeaks the renewal of spring,
Fly hence, if thou wilt, to the woods,
Or where it shall please thee to sing:
And shouldst thou, compelled by a frost,
Come again to my window or door,
Doubt not an affectionate host,
Only pay as thou paidst me before.

Thus music must needs be confessed
To flow from a fountain above;
Else how should it work in the breast
Unchangeable friendship and love?
And who on the globe can be found,
Save your generation and ours,
That can be delighted by sound,
Or boasts any musical powers?

STRADA'S NIGHTINGALE

The shepherd touched his reed; sweet Philomel
Essayed, and oft essayed to catch the strain,
And treasuring, as on her ear they fell,
The numbers, echoed note for note again.

The peevish youth, who ne'er had found before
A rival of his skill, indignant heard,
And soon (for various was his tuneful store)
In lŏftier tones defied the simple bird.

She dared the task, and, rising as he rose,
With all the force that passion gives inspired,
Returned the sounds awhile, but in the close
Exhausted fell, and at his feet expired.

Thus strength, not skill prevailed. O fatal strife,
By thee, poor songstress, playfully begun;
And, O sad victory, which cost thy life,
And he may wish that he had never won!

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A LADY,

WHO LIVED ONE HUNDRED YEARS, AND DIED ON HER BIRTHDAY, 1728.

ANCIENT dame, how wide and vast
  To a race like ours appears,
Rounded to an orb at last,
  All thy multitude of years!

We, the herd of human kind,
  Frailer and of feebler powers;
We, to narrow bounds confined,
  Soon exhaust the sum of ours.

Death's delicious banquet—we
  Perish even from the womb,
Swifter than a shadow flee,
  Nourished but to feed the tomb.

Seeds of merciless disease
  Lurk in all that we enjoy;
Some that waste us by degrees,
  Some that suddenly destroy.

And, if life o'erleap the bourn
  Common to the sons of men,
What remains, but that we mourn,
  Dream, and dote, and drivel then?

Fast as moons can wax and wane
  Sorrow comes; and while we groan,
Pant with anguish, and complain,
  Half our years are fled and gone.

If a few (to few 'tis given),
  Lingering on this earthly stage,
Creep and halt with steps uneven
  To the period of an age,

Wherefore live they, but to see
  Cunning, arrogance, and force,
Sights lamented much by thee,
  Holding their accustomed course?

Oft was seen, in ages past,
  All that we with wonder view;
Often shall be to the last;
  Earth produces nothing new.

Thee we gratulate, content
Should propitious Heaven design
Life for us as calmly spent,
Though but half the length of thine.

THE CAUSE WON.

Two neighbours furiously dispute;
A field—the subject of the suit.
Trivial the spot, yet such the rage
With which the combatants engage,
'Twere hard to tell who covets most
The prize——at whatsoever cost.
The pleadings swell. Words still suffice:
No single word but has its price.
No term but yields some fair pretence
For novel and increased expense.
Defendant thus becomes a name,
Which he that bore it may disclaim,
Since both, in one description blended,
Are plaintiffs—when the suit is ended.

THE SILKWORM.

The beams of April, ere it goes,
A worm, scarce visible, disclose;
All winter long content to dwell
The tenant of his native shell.
The same prolific season gives
The sustenance by which he lives,
The mulberry leaf, a simple store,
That serves him—till he needs no more!
For, his dimensions once complete,
Thenceforth none ever sees him eat;
Though till his growing time be past
Scarce ever is he seen to fast.
That hour arrived, his work begins,
He spins and weaves, and weaves and spins;
Till circle upon circle wound
Careless around him and around,
Conceals him with a veil, though slight,
Impervious to the keenest sight.
Thus self-enclosed as in a cask,
At length he finishes his task;
And, though a worm when he was lost,
Or caterpillar at the most,

When next we see him, wings he wears,
And in papilio-pomp appears;
Becomes oviparous; supplies
With future worms and future flies
The next ensuing year—and dies!
Well were it for the world, if all
Who creep about this earthly ball,
Though shorter lived than most he be,
Were useful in their kind as he.

THE INNOCENT THIEF.

Not a flower can be found in the fields,
  Or the spot that we till for our pleasure,
From the largest to least, but it yields
  The bee, never wearied, a treasure.

Scarce any she quits unexplored
  With a diligence truly exact;
Yet, steal what she may for her hoard,
  Leaves evidence none of the fact.

Her lucrative task she pursues,
  And pilfers with so much address,
That none of their odour they lose,
  Nor charm by their beauty the less.

Not thus inoffensively preys
  The cankerworm, indwelling foe!
His voracity not thus allays
  The sparrow, the finch, or the crow.

The worm, more expensively fed,
  The pride of the garden devours;
And birds peck the seed from the bed,
  Still less to be spared than the flowers.

But she, with such delicate skill,
  Her pillage so fits for her use,
That the chemist in vain with his still
  Would labour the like to produce.

Then grudge not her temperate meals,
  Nor a benefit blame as a theft;
Since, stole she not all that she steals,
  Neither honey nor wax would be left.

DENNER'S OLD WOMAN.*

In this mimic form of a matron in years,
How plainly the pencil of Denner appears!
The matron herself, in whose old age we see
Not a trace of decline, what a wonder is she!
No dimness of eye, and no cheek hanging low,
No wrinkle, or deep-furrowed frown on the brow!
Her forehead indeed is here circled around
With locks like the riband with which they are bound;
While glossy and smooth, and as soft as the skin
Of a delicate peach, is the down of her chin;
But nothing unpleasant, or sad, or severe,
Or that indicates life in its winter—is here.
Yet all is expressed with fidelity due,
Nor a pimple or freckle concealed from the view.
Many fond of new sights, or who cherish a taste
For the labours of art, to the spectacle haste.
The youths all agree, that could old age inspire
The passion of love, hers would kindle the fire,
And the matrons with pleasure confess that they see
Ridiculous nothing or hideous in thee.
The nymphs for themselves scarcely hope a decline,
O wonderful woman! as placid as thine.
Strange magic of art! which the youth can engage
To peruse, half enamoured, the features of age;
And force from the virgin a sigh of despair,
That she when as old shall be equally fair!
How great is the glory that Denner has gained,
Since Apelles not more for his Venus obtained.

THE TEARS OF A PAINTER.

Apelles, hearing that his boy
Had just expired—his only joy!
Although the sight with anguish tore him,
Bade place his dear remains before him.
He seized his brush, his colours spread;
And—"Oh! my child, accept,"—he said,
"('Tis all that I can now bestow),
This tribute of a father's woe!"
Then, faithful to the twofold part,
Both of his feelings and his art,

* It is stated in a note to the editions of Bourne's Poems, that Denner's picture was exhibited in Old Palace Yard near Westminster Abbey.

He closed his eyes with tender care,
And formed at once a fellow pair.
His brow with amber locks beset,
And lips he drew not livid yet;
And shaded all that he had done
To a just image of his son.
Thus far is well. But view again
The cause of thy paternal pain!
Thy melancholy task fulfil!
It needs the last, last touches still.
Again his pencil's powers he tries,
For on his lips a smile he spies:
And still his cheek unfaded shows
The deepest damask of the rose.
Then, heedful to the finished whole,
With fondest eagerness he stole,
Till scarce himself distinctly knew
The cherub copied from the true.
Now, painter cease! Thy task is done.
Long lives this image of thy son;
Nor short lived shall the glory prove
Or of thy labour or thy love.

THE MAZE.

From right to left, and to and fro,
Caught in a labyrinth you go,
And turn, and turn, and turn again,
To solve the mystery, but in vain;
Stand still, and breathe, and take from me
A clue, that soon shall set you free!
Not Ariadne, if you met her,
Herself could serve you with a better,
You entered easily—find where—
And make with ease your exit there!

NO SORROW PECULIAR TO THE SUFFERER.

The lover, in melodious verses,
His singular distress rehearses.
Still closing with a rueful cry,
"Was ever such a wretch as I!"
Yes! thousands have endured before
All thy distress; some, haply, more.
Unnumbered Corydons complain,
And Strephons, of the like disdain;

And if thy Chloe be of steel,
Too deaf to hear, too hard to feel;
Not her alone that censure fits,
Nor thou alone hast lost thy wits.

THE SNAIL.

To grass, or leaf, or fruit, or wall,
The Snail sticks close, nor fears to fall,
As if he grew there, house and all
Together.

Within that house secure he hides,
When danger imminent betides
Of storm, or other harm besides
Of weather.

Give but his horns the slightest touch,
His self-collecting power is such,
He shrinks into his house with much
Displeasure.

Where'er he dwells, he dwells alone,
Except himself has chattels none,
Well satisfied to be his own
Whole treasure.

Thus, hermit-like, his life he leads,
Nor partner of his banquet needs,
And if he meets one, only feeds
The faster.

Who seeks him must be worse than blind,
(He and his house are so combined)
If, finding it, he fails to find
Its master.

THE CANTAB.

With two spurs, or one, and no great matter which,
Boots bought, or boots borrowed, a whip or a switch,
Five shillings or less for the hire of his beast,
Paid part into hand;—you must wait for the rest.
Thus equipt, Academicus climbs up his horse,
And out they both sally for better or worse;
His heart void of fear, and as light as a feather;
And in violent haste to go not knowing whither:

Through the fields and the towns (see !) he scampers along,
And is looked at and laughed at by old and by young,
Till at length overspent, and his sides smeared with blood,
Down tumbles his horse, man and all, in the mud.
In a waggon or chaise shall he finish his route?
Oh ! scandalous fate! he must do it on foot.
Young gentlemen, hear !—I am older than you!
The advice that I give I have proved to be true:
Wherever your journey may be, never doubt it,
The faster you ride, you're the longer about it.

EPIGRAMS TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN OF OWEN.*

ON ONE IGNORANT AND ARROGANT.

Thou mayst of double ignorance boast,
Who know'st not that thou nothing know st.

PRUDENT SIMPLICITY.

That thou mayst injure no man, dovelike be,
And serpentlike, that none may injure thee!

TO A FRIEND IN DISTRESS.

I wish thy lot, now bad, still worse, my friend;
For when at worst, they say, things always mend.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

When little more than boy in age,
I deemed myself almost a sage:
But now seem worthier to be styled,
For ignorance, almost a child.

* John Owen was a well-known Epigrammatist, who lived in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. Born 1560; died 1622.

RETALIATION.

THE works of ancient bards divine,
  Aulus, thou scorn'st to read;
And should posterity read thine,
  It would be strange indeed!

SUNSET AND SUNRISE.

CONTEMPLATE, when the sun declines,
  Thy death with deep reflection!
And when again he rising shines,
  Thy day of resurrection!

ON THE SHORTNESS OF HUMAN LIFE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN OF DR. JORTIN.*

SUNS that set, and moons that wane,
Rise and are restored again;
Stars that orient day subdues,
Night at her return renews.
Herbs and flowers, the beauteous birth
Of the genial womb of earth,
Suffer but a transient death
From the winter's cruel breath.
Zephyr speaks; serener skies
Warm the glebe, and they arise.
We, alas! earth's haughty kings,
We, that promise mighty things,
Losing soon life's happy prime,
Droop and fade in little time.
Spring returns, but not our bloom;
Still 'tis winter in the tomb.

* This little poem was sent to Newton by Cowper, on the 25th January, 1784. He prefaced it with a copy of the original by Dr. Jortin, and the following introduction:—

"The late Doctor Jortin
Had the good fortune
To write these verses
Upon tombs and hearses,
Which I, being jinglish,
Have done into English."

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FRENCH OF MADAME DE LA MOTTE GUYON.*

THE NATIVITY.

'Tis Folly all—let me no more be told
Of Parian porticos, and roofs of gold;
Delightful views of Nature, dressed by Art,
Enchant no longer this indifferent heart:
The Lord of all things, in His humble birth,
Makes mean the proud magnificence of earth;
The straw, the manger, and the mouldering wall,
Eclipse its lustre; and I scorn it all.
  Canals, and fountains, and delicious vales,
Green slopes, and plains whose plenty never fails;
Deep-rooted groves, whose heads sublimely rise,
Earth-born, and yet ambitious of the skies;
The abundant foliage of whose gloomy shades,
Vainly the sun in all its power invades,
Where warbled airs of sprightly birds resound,
Whose verdure lives while Winter scowls around;
Rocks, lofty mountains, caverns dark and deep,
And torrents raving down the rugged steep;
Smooth downs, whose fragrant herbs the spirits cheer:
Meads crowned with flowers; streams musical and clear,
Whose silver waters, and whose murmurs, join
Their artless charms, to make the scene divine;
The fruitful vineyard, and the furrowed plain,
That seems a rolling sea of golden grain;
All, all have lost the charms they once possessed:
An infant God reigns sovereign in my breast;
From Bethlehem's bosom I no more will rove;
There dwells the Saviour, and there rests my love.
  Ye mightier rivers, that, with sounding force,
Urge down the valleys your impetuous course!
Winds, clouds, and lightnings! and ye waves, whose heads,
Curled into monstrous forms, the seaman dreads!
Horrid abyss, where all experience fails,
Spread with the wreck of planks and shattered sails;

* A very celebrated French lady. She preached *Quietism*, a calm devotion resting on the love of God, but her opinions were undoubtedly fanatical and exaggerated. She suffered much persecution on account of them, and was imprisoned in the Bastille for four years. She wrote much and well. Cowper's friend, Mr. Bull, brought him her poems in 1782, and he began translating them.

On whose broad back grim Death triumphant rides,
While havoc floats on all thy swelling tides,
Thy shores a scene of ruin, strewed around
With vessels bulged, and bodies of the drowned!
  Ye fish, that sport beneath the boundless waves,
And rest, secure from man, in rocky caves;
Swift-darting sharks, and whales of hideous size,
Whom all the aquatic world with terror eyes!
Had I but faith immoveable and true,
I might defy the fiercest storm, like you:
The world, a more disturbed and boisterous sea,
When Jesus shows a smile, affrights not me;
He hides me, and in vain the billows roar,
Break harmless at my feet, and leave the shore.
  Thou azure vault, where, through the gloom of night
Thick sown we see such countless worlds of light!
Thou moon, whose car, encompassing the skies,
Restores lost nature to our wondering eyes;
Again retiring, when the brighter sun
Begins the course he seems in haste to run!
Behold him where he shines! His rapid rays,
Themselves unmeasured, measure all our days;
Nothing impedes the race he would pursue,
Nothing escapes his penetrating view,
A thousand lands confess his quickening heat,
And all he cheers are fruitful, fair, and sweet.
  Far from enjoying what these scenes disclose,
I feel the thorn, alas! but miss the rose:
Too well I know this aching heart requires
More solid good to fill its vast desires;
In vain they represent His matchless might,
Who called them out of deep primeval night;
Their form and beauty but augment my woe:
I seek the Giver of the charms they show:
Nor, Him beside, throughout the world He made,
Lives there in whom I trust for cure or aid.
  Infinite God, thou great unrivalled ONE!
Whose glory makes a blot of yonder sun;
Compared with Thine, how dim his beauty seems!
How quenched the radiance of his golden beams!
Thou art my bliss, the light by which I move;
In Thee alone dwells all that I can love;
All darkness flies when Thou art pleased to appear,
A sudden spring renews the fading year;
Where'er I turn, I see Thy power and grace,
The watchful guardians of our heedless race;
Thy various creatures in one strain agree,
All, in all times and places, speak of Thee;

Even I, with trembling heart and stammering tongue,
Attempt Thy praise, and join the general song.
Almighty Former of this wondrous plan,
Faintly reflected in Thine image, man—
Holy and just—the greatness of whose name
Fills and supports this universal frame,
Diffused throughout the infinitude of space,
Who art Thyself Thine own vast dwelling-place;
Soul of our soul, whom yet no sense of ours
Discerns, eluding our most active powers;
Encircling shades attend Thine awful throne,
That veil Thy face, and keep Thee still unknown;
Unknown, though dwelling in our inmost part,
Lord of the thoughts, and Sovereign of the heart.
Repeat the charming truth, that never tires,
No God is like the God my soul desires;
He at whose voice heaven trembles, even He,
Great as He is, knows how to stoop to me—
Lo! there He lies—that smiling infant said,
"Heaven, Earth, and Sea, exist!"—and they obeyed.
Even He whose being swells beyond the skies,
Is born of woman, lives, and mourns, and dies;
Eternal and Immortal, seems to cast
That glory from His brows, and breathes His last.
Trivial and vain the works that man has wrought,
How do they shrink and vanish at the thought!
Sweet Solitude, and scene of my repose!
This rustic sight assuages all my woes—
That crib contains the Lord, whom I adore;
And earth's a shade, that I pursue no more.
He is my firm support, my rock, my tower,
I dwell secure beneath His sheltering power,
And hold this mean retreat for ever dear,
For all I love, my soul's delight, is here.
I see the Almighty swathed in infant bands,
Tied helpless down the Thunder-bearer's hands!
And in this shed that mystery discern,
Which Faith and Love, and they alone, can learn.
Ye tempests, spare the slumbers of your Lord!
Ye zephyrs, all your whispered sweets afford!
Confess the God that guides the rolling year;
Heaven, do Him homage; and thou, Earth, revere!
Ye shepherds, monarchs, sages, hither bring
Your hearts an offering, and adore your King!
Pure be those hearts and rich in Faith and Love;
Join in His praise, the harmonious world above;
To Bethlehem haste, rejoice in His repose,
And praise Him there for all that He bestows!

Man, busy man, alas, can ill afford
To obey the summons and attend the Lord;
Perverted reason revels and runs wild,
By glittering shows of pomp and wealth beguiled;
And, blind to genuine excellence and grace,
Finds not her Author in so mean a place.
Ye unbelieving! learn a wiser part,
Distrust your erring sense, and search your heart;
There soon ye shall perceive a kindling flame
Glow for that infant God, from whom it came;
Resist not, quench not, that divine desire,
Melt all your adamant in heavenly fire!
Not so will I requite thee, gentle Love!
Yielding and soft this heart shall ever prove;
And every heart beneath thy power should fall,
Glad to submit, could mine contain them all.
But I am poor, oblation I have none,
None for a Saviour, but Himself alone:
Whate'er I render Thee, from Thee it came;
And if I give my body to the flame,
My patience, love, and energy divine
Of heart, and soul, and spirit, all are Thine.
Ah, vain attempt to expunge the mighty score!
The more I pay, I owe Thee still the more.
Upon my meanness, poverty, and guilt,
The trophy of my glory shall be built;
My self-disdain shall be the unshaken base,
And my deformity its fairest grace;
For destitute of good, and rich in ill,
Must be my state and my description still.
And do I grieve at such an humbling lot?
Nay, but I cherish and enjoy the thought—
Vain pageantry and pomp of earth, adieu!
I have no wish, no memory for you.
The more I feel my misery, I adore
The sacred inmate of my soul the more;
Rich in his Love, I feel my noblest pride
Spring from the sense of having nought beside.
In Thee I find wealth, comfort, virtue, might;
My wanderings prove Thy wisdom infinite;
All that I have I give Thee; and then see
All contrarieties unite in Thee;
For Thou hast joined them, taking up our woe,
And pouring out Thy bliss on worms below,
By filling with Thy grace and love divine
A gulf of evil in this heart of mine.
This is, indeed, to bid the valleys rise,
And the hills sink—'tis matching earth and skies!

I feel my weakness, thank Thee, and deplore
An aching heart, that throbs to thank Thee more;
The more I love Thee, I the more reprove
A soul so lifeless, and so slow to love;
Till, on a deluge of Thy mercy tossed,
I plunge into that sea, and there am lost.

GOD NEITHER KNOWN NOR LOVED BY THE WORLD.

YE Linnets, let us try, beneath this grove,
Which shall be loudest in our Maker's praise!
In quest of some forlorn retreat I rove,
For all the world is blind, and wanders from His ways.

That God alone should prop the sinking soul,
Fills them with rage against His empire now:
I traverse earth in vain from pole to pole,
To seek one simple heart, set free from all below.

They speak of Love, yet little feel its sway,
While in their bosoms many an idol lurks;
Their base desires, well satisfied, obey,
Leave the Creator's hand, and lean upon His works.

'Tis therefore I can dwell with man no more;
Your fellowship, ye warblers! suits me best:
Pure Love has lost its price, though prized of yore,
Profaned by modern tongues, and slighted as a jest.

My God, who formed you for His praise alone,
Beholds His purpose well fulfilled in you;
Come, let us join the choir before His throne,
Partaking in His praise with spirits just and true!

Yes, I will always love; and, as I ought,
Tune to the praise of Love my ceaseless voice;
Preferring Love too vast for human thought,
In spite of erring men, who cavil at my choice.

Why have I not a thousand thousand hearts,
Lord of my soul! that they might all be Thine?
If Thou approve—the zeal Thy smile imparts,
How should it ever fail! Can such a fire decline?

Love, pure and holy, is a deathless fire;
Its object heavenly, it must ever blaze:
Eternal Love a God must needs inspire,
When once He wins the heart, and fits it for His praise.

Self-love dismissed—'tis then we live indeed—
In her embrace, death, only death, is found:
Come, then, one noble effort, and succeed,
Cast off the chain of Self with which thy soul is bound!

Oh! I would cry, that all the world might hear,
Ye self-tormentors, love your God alone:
Let His unequalled excellence be dear,
Dear to your inmost souls, and make Him all your own!

They hear me not—alas! how fond to rove
In endless chase of Folly's specious lure!
'Tis here alone, beneath this shady grove,
I taste the sweets of Truth—here only am secure.

THE SWALLOW.

I AM fond of the Swallow—I learn from her flight,
Had I skill to improve it, a lesson of Love:
How seldom on earth do we see her alight!
She dwells in the skies, she is ever above.

It is on the wing that she takes her repose,
Suspended and poised in the regions of air,
'Tis not in our fields that her sustenance grows,
It is winged like herself, 'tis ethereal fare.

She comes in the spring, all the summer she stays,
And, dreading the cold, still follows the sun—
So, true to our Love, we should covet his rays,
And the place where he shines not, immediately shun.

Our light should be Love, and our nourishment prayer;
It is dangerous food that we find upon earth;
The fruit of this world is beset with a snare,
In itself it is hurtful, as vile in its birth.

'Tis rarely, if ever, she settles below,
And only when building a nest for her young;
Were it not for her brood, she would never bestow
A thought upon any thing filthy as dung.

Let us leave it ourselves ('tis a mortal abode),
To bask every moment in infinite Love;
Let us fly the dark winter, and follow the road
That leads to the dayspring appearing above.

THE TRIUMPH OF HEAVENLY LOVE DESIRED.

Ah! reign, wherever man is found,
My Spouse, beloved and divine!
Then I am rich, and I abound,
When every human heart is thine.

A thousand sorrows pierce my soul,
To think that all are not thine own:
Ah! be adored from pole to pole;
Where is thy zeal? arise; be known!

All hearts are cold, in every place,
Yet earthly good with warmth pursue;
Dissolve them with a flash of grace,
Thaw these of ice, and give us new!

A FIGURATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE OF DIVINE LOVE,

IN BRINGING A SOUL TO THE POINT OF SELF-RENUNCIATION AND ABSOLUTE ACQUIESCENCE.

'Twas my purpose, on a day,
To embark, and sail away;
As I climbed the vessel's side,
Love was sporting in the tide;
"Come," he said,—"ascend—make haste,
Launch into the boundless waste."

Many mariners were there,
Having each his separate care;
They that rowed us held their eyes
Fixed upon the starry skies;
Others steered, or turned the sails
To receive the shifting gales.

Love, with power divine supplied,
Suddenly my courage tried;
In a moment it was night,
Ship and skies were out of sight;
On the briny wave I lay,
Floating rushes all my stay.

Did I with resentment burn
At this unexpected turn?
Did I wish myself on shore,
Never to forsake it more?

No—"My soul," I cried, "be still;
If I must be lost, I will."

Next he hastened to convey
Both my frail supports away;
Seized my rushes; bade the waves
Yawn into a thousand graves:
Down I went, and sunk as lead,
Ocean closing o'er my head.

Still, however, life was safe;
And I saw him turn and laugh:
"Friend," he cried, "adieu! lie low,
While the wintry storms shall blow;
When the spring has calmed the main,
You shall rise and float again."

Soon I saw him, with dismay,
Spread his plumes, and soar away;
Now I mark his rapid flight;
Now he leaves my aching sight;
He is gone whom I adore,
'Tis in vain to seek him more.

How I trembled then and feared,
When my love had disappeared!
"Wilt thou leave me thus," I cried,
"Whelmed beneath the rolling tide?"
Vain attempt to reach his ear!
Love was gone and would not hear.

"Ah! return, and love me still;
See me subject to thy will;
Frown with wrath, or smile with grace,
Only let me see thy face!
Evil I have none to fear,
All is good, if thou art near."

Yet He leaves me—cruel fate!
Leaves me in my lost estate—
"Have I sinned? Oh, say wherein;
Tell me, and forgive my sin;
King, and Lord, whom I adore,
Shall I see thy face no more?

"Be not angry; I resign,
Henceforth, all my will to thine:
I consent that thou depart,
Though thine absence breaks my heart;
Go, then, and for ever too;
All is right that thou wilt do."

This was just what Love intended,
He was now no more offended;
Soon as I became a child,
Love returned to me and smiled;
Never strife shall more betide
'Twixt the Bridegroom and his Bride.

TRUTH AND DIVINE LOVE REJECTED BY THE WORLD.

O Love, of pure and heavenly birth!
O simple Truth, scarce known on earth!
Whom men resist with stubborn will;
And, more perverse and daring still,
Smother and quench, with reasonings vain,
While Error and Deception reign.

Whence comes it, that, your power the same
As His on high, from whence you came,
Ye rarely find a listening ear,
Or heart that makes you welcome here?—
Because ye bring reproach and pain,
Where'er ye visit, in your train.

The world is proud, and cannot bear
The scorn and calumny ye share;
The praise of men the mark they mean,
They fly the place where ye are seen;
Pure Love, with scandal in the rear,
Suits not the vain; it costs too dear.

Then, let the price be what it may,
Though poor, I am prepared to pay;
Come Shame, come Sorrow; spite of tears,
Weakness, and heart-oppressing fears;
One soul, at least, shall not repine,
To give you room; come reign in mine!

DIVINE JUSTICE AMIABLE.*

Thou hast no lightnings, O Thou Just!
Or I their force should know;
And if Thou strike me into dust,
My soul approves the blow.

* Written when her son died.

The heart, that values less its ease
  Than it adores Thy ways,
In Thine avenging anger sees
  A subject of its praise.

Pleased I could lie, concealed and lost,
  In shades of central night;
Not to avoid Thy wrath, Thou knowest,
  But lest I grieve Thy sight.

Smite me, O Thou whom I provoke!
  And I will love Thee still:
The well-deserved and righteous stroke
  Shall please me, though it kill.

Am I not worthy to sustain
  The worst Thou canst devise:
And dare I seek Thy throne again,
  And meet Thy sacred eyes?

Far from afflicting, Thou art kind;
  And, in my saddest hours,
An unction of Thy grace I find,
  Pervading all my powers.

Alas! Thou sparest me yet again;
  And, when Thy wrath should move,
Too gentle to endure my pain,
  Thou sooth'st me with Thy Love.

I have no punishment to fear;
  But, ah! that smile from Thee
Imparts a pang far more severe
  Than woe itself would be.

THE SOUL THAT LOVES GOD FINDS HIM EVERYWHERE.*

O Thou, by long experience tried,
Near whom no grief can long abide;
My Love! how full of sweet content
I pass my years of banishment!

All scenes alike engaging prove
To souls impressed with sacred Love!
Where'er they dwell, they dwell in Thee;
In heaven, in earth, or on the sea.

To me remains nor place nor time;
My country is in every clime;
I can be calm and free from care,
On any shore, since God is there.

While place we seek, or place we shun,
The soul finds happiness in none;
But with a God to guide our way,
'Tis equal joy to go or stay.

Could I be cast where Thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot;
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all.

My country, Lord, art Thou alone;
Nor other can I claim or own;
The point where all my wishes meet;
My Law, my Love; life's only sweet!

I hold by nothing here below;
Appoint my journey, and I go;
Though pierced by scorn, oppressed by pride,
I feel Thee good—feel nought beside.

No frowns of men can hurtful prove
To souls on fire with heavenly Love;
Though men and devils both condemn,
No gloomy days arise from them.

Ah then! to His embrace repair;
My soul, thou art no stranger there;
There Love Divine shall be thy guard,
And peace and safety thy reward.

A CHILD OF GOD LONGING TO SEE HIM BELOVED.

There's not an echo round me,
But I am glad should learn,
How pure a fire has found me,—
The Love with which I burn.
For none attends with pleasure
To what I would reveal;
They slight me out of measure,
And laugh at all I feel.

The rocks receive less proudly
The story of my flame;
When I approach, they loudly
Reverberate His name.

I speak to them of sadness,
And comforts at a stand;
They bid me look for gladness,
And better days at hand.

Far from all habitation,
I heard a happy sound;
Big with the consolation,
That I have often found;
I said "My lot is sorrow,
My grief has no alloy;"
The rocks replied—"To-morrow,
To-morrow brings thee joy."

These sweet and secret tidings,
What bliss it is to hear!
For, spite of all my chidings,
My weakness, and my fear,
No sooner I receive them,
Than I forget my pain,
And, happy to believe them,
I love as much again.

I fly to scenes romantic,
Where never men resort;
For in an age so frantic
Impiety is sport.
For riot and confusion
They barter things above;
Condemning, as delusion,
The joy of perfect Love.

In this sequestered corner,
None hears what I express;
Delivered from the scorner,
What peace do I possess!
Beneath the boughs reclining
Or roving o'er the wild,
I live as undesigning
And harmless as a child.

No troubles here surprise me,
I innocently play,
While Providence supplies me,
And guards me all the day:
My dear and kind Defender
Preserves me safely here,
From men of pomp and splendour,
Who fill a child with fear.

ASPIRATIONS OF THE SOUL AFTER GOD.

My Spouse! in whose presence I live,
Sole object of all my desires,
Who know'st what a flame I conceive,
And canst easily double its fires;
How pleasant is all that I meet!
From fear of adversity free.
I find even sorrow made sweet;
Because 'tis assigned me by Thee.

Transported I see Thee display
Thy riches and glory divine;
I have only my life to repay,
Take what I would gladly resign.
Thy will is the treasure I seek,
For Thou art as faithful as strong;
There let me, obedient and meek,
Repose myself all the day long.

My spirit and faculties fail;
Oh finish what Love has begun!
Destroy what is sinful and frail,
And dwell in the soul Thou hast won!
Dear theme of my wonder and praise,
I cry, who is worthy as Thou!
I can only be silent and gaze:
'Tis all that is left to me now.

O glory, in which I am lost,
Too deep for the plummet of thought!
On an ocean of deity tossed,
I am swallowed, I sink into nought.
Yet, lost and absorbed as I seem,
I chant to the praise of my King;
And, though overwhelmed by the theme,
Am happy whenever I sing.

GRATITUDE AND LOVE TO GOD.*

All are indebted much to thee,
But I far more than all,
From many a deadly snare set free,
And raised from many a fall.

* Written when she believed herself converted.

Overwhelm me, from above,
Daily, with Thy boundless Love.

What bonds of gratitude I feel,
No language can declare;
Beneath the oppressive weight I reel,
'Tis more than I can bear:
When shall I that blessing prove,
To return thee Love for Love?

Spirit of Charity, dispense
Thy grace to every heart;
Expel all other spirits thence,
Drive Self from every part;
Charity divine, draw nigh,
Break the chains in which we lie!

All selfish souls, whate'er they feign,
Have still a slavish lot;
They boast of Liberty in vain,
Of Love, and feel it not.
He whose bosom glows with Thee,
He, and he alone, is free.

O blessedness, all bliss above,
When thy pure fires prevail!
Love only teaches what is Love;
All other lessons fail:
We learn its name, but not its powers,
Experience only makes it ours.

HAPPY SOLITUDE—UNHAPPY MEN.

My heart is easy, and my burthen light;
I smile, though sad, when Thou art in my sight:
The more my woes in secret I deplore,
I taste Thy goodness, and I love, the more.

There, while a solemn stillness reigns around,
Faith, Love, and Hope within my soul abound;
And, while the world suppose me lost in care,
The joys of angels, unperceived, I share.

Thy creatures wrong thee, O Thou Sovereign Good!
Thou art not loved, because not understood;
This grieves me most, that vain pursuits beguile
Ungrateful men, regardless of Thy smile.

Frail beauty and false honour are adored:
While Thee they scorn, and trifle with Thy Word;
Pass, unconcerned, a Saviour's sorrows by;
And hunt their ruin with a zeal to die.

LIVING WATER.

The fountain in its source
No drought of summer fears;
The farther it pursues its course,
The nobler it appears.

But shallow cisterns yield
A scanty, short supply;
The morning sees them amply filled,
At evening they are dry.

THE TESTIMONY OF DIVINE ADOPTION.

How happy are the new-born race;
Partakers of adopting grace;
How pure the bliss they share!
Hid from the world and all its eyes,
Within their heart the blessing lies,
And Conscience feels it there.

The moment we believe, 'tis ours;
And if we love with all our powers
The God from whom it came;
And if we serve with hearts sincere,
'Tis still discernible and clear,
An undisputed claim.

But, ah! if foul and wilful sin
Stain and dishonour us within,
Farewell the joy we knew;
Again the slaves of Nature's sway,
In labyrinths of our own we stray,
Without a guide or clue.

The chaste and pure, who fear to grieve
The gracious Spirit they receive,
His work distinctly trace:
And, strong in undissembling love,
Boldly assert and clearly prove
Their hearts His dwelling-place.

O messenger of dear delight,
Whose voice dispels the deepest night,
Sweet peace-proclaiming Dove!
With thee at hand, to soothe our pains,
No wish unsatisfied remains,
No task but that of Love.

'Tis Love unites what Sin divides;
The centre where all bliss resides,
To which the soul once brought,
Reclining on the first great Cause,
From His abounding sweetness draws
Peace passing human thought.

Sorrow foregoes its nature there,
And life assumes a tranquil air,
Divested of its woes;
There sovereign Goodness soothes the breast,
Till then incapable of rest,
In sacred sure repose.

DIVINE LOVE ENDURES NO RIVAL.

Love is the Lord whom I obey,
Whose will transported I perform;
The centre of my rest, my stay,
Love! all in all to me, myself a worm.

For uncreated charms I burn,
Oppressed by slavish fear no more;
For One in whom I may discern,
Even when He frowns, a sweetness I adore.

He little loves Him who complains,
And finds Him rigorous and severe;
His heart is sordid, and he feigns,
Though loud in boasting of a soul sincere.

Love causes grief, but 'tis to move
And stimulate the slumbering mind;
And he has never tasted Love,
Who shuns a pang so graciously designed.

Sweet is the cross, above all sweets,
To souls enamoured with Thy smiles;
The keenest woe life ever meets,
Love strips of all its terrors, and beguiles.

'Tis just that God should not be dear,
Where Self engrosses all the thought,
And groans and murmurs make it clear,
Whatever else is loved, the Lord is not.

The Love of Thee flows just as much
As that of ebbing Self subsides;
Our hearts, their scantiness is such,
Bear not the conflict of two rival tides.

Both cannot govern in one soul;
Then let Self-love be dispossessed;
The Love of God deserves the whole,
And will not dwell with so despised a gue

SELF-DIFFIDENCE.

Source of love, and light of day,
Tear me from myself away;
Every view and thought of mine
Cast into the mould of Thine;
Teach, oh teach, this faithless heart,
A consistent, constant part;
Or, if it must live to grow
More rebellious, break it now!

Is it thus that I requite
Grace and goodness infinite?
Every trace of every boon,
Cancelled and erased so soon!
Can I grieve Thee, whom I love;
Thee, in whom I live and move?
If my sorrow touch Thee still,
Save me from so great an ill!

Oh! the oppressive, irksome weight
Felt in an uncertain state;
Comfort, peace, and rest, adieu,
Should I prove at last untrue!
Still I choose Thee, follow still
Every notice of Thy will;
But, unstable, strangely weak,
Still let slip the good I seek.

Self-confiding wretch, I thought
I could serve thee as I ought,
Win thee, and deserve to feel
All the Love Thou canst reveal;

Trusting Self, a bruised reed,
Is to be deceived indeed:
Save me from this harm and loss,
Lest my gold turn all to dross!

Self is earthly—Faith alone
Makes an unseen world our own;
Faith relinquished, how we roam,
Feel our way, and leave our home!
Spurious gems our hopes entice,
While we scorn the pearl of price;
And, preferring servants' pay,
Cast the children's bread away.

THE ACQUIESCENCE OF PURE LOVE.

Love! if Thy destined sacrifice am I,
Come, slay thy victim, and prepare thy fires:
Plunged in Thy depths of mercy, let me die
The death which every soul that lives desires!

I watch my hours, and see them fleet away;
The time is long that I have languished here;
Yet all my thoughts Thy purposes obey,
With no reluctance, cheerful and sincere.

To me 'tis equal, whether Love ordain
My life or death, appoint me pain or ease;
My soul perceives no real ill in pain;
In ease or health no real good she sees.

One Good she covets, and that Good alone,
To choose Thy will, from selfish bias free;
And to prefer a cottage to a throne,
And grief to comfort, if it pleases Thee.

That we should bear the cross is Thy command,
Die to the world, and live to Self no more;
Suffer, unmoved, beneath the rudest hand,
As pleased when shipwrecked as when safe on shore.

REPOSE IN GOD.

Blest! who, far from all mankind,
This world's shadows left behind,
Hears from heaven a gentle strain
Whispering Love, and loves again.

Blest! who, free from Self-esteem,
Dives into the Great Supreme,
All desire besides discards,
Joys inferior none regards.

Blest! who in Thy bosom seeks
Rest that nothing earthly breaks,
Dead to self and worldly things,
Lost in thee, thou King of kings!

Ye that know my secret fire,
Softly speak and soon retire;
Favour my divine repose,
Spare the sleep a God bestows.

GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

Oh loved! but not enough—though dearer far
Than Self and its most loved enjoyments are;
None duly loves Thee, but who, nobly free
From sensual objects, finds his all in Thee.

Glory of God! thou stranger here below,
Whom man nor knows, nor feels a wish to know;
Our faith and reason are both shocked to find
Man in the post of honour—Thee behind.

Reason exclaims—"Let every creature fall,
Ashamed, abased, before the Lord of all;"
And Faith, o'erwhelmed with such a dazzling blaze,
Feebly describes the beauty she surveys.

Yet man, dim-sighted man, and rash as blind,
Deaf to the dictates of his better mind,
In frantic competition dares the skies,
And claims precedence of the Only Wise.

Oh lost in vanity, till once self-known!
Nothing is great, or good, but God alone;
When thou shalt stand before His awful face,
Then, at the last, thy pride shall know his place.

Glorious, Almighty, First, and Without End!
When wilt Thou melt the mountains and descend?
When wilt Thou shoot abroad Thy conquering rays,
And teach these atoms Thou hast made, thy praise?

Thy Glory is the sweetest heaven I feel;
And, if I seek it with too fierce a zeal,
Thy Love, triumphant o'er a selfish will,
Taught me the passion, and inspires it still.

My reason, all my faculties, unite,
To make Thy glory their supreme delight;
Forbid it, Fountain of my brightest days,
That I should rob Thee, and usurp Thy praise!

My soul! rest happy in thy low estate,
Nor hope, nor wish, to be esteemed or great;
To take the impression of a will divine,
Be that thy glory, and those riches thine.

Confess Him righteous in His just decrees,
Love what He loves, and let His pleasure please;
Die daily; from the touch of sin recede;
Then thou hast crowned Him, and He reigns indeed.

SELF-LOVE AND TRUTH INCOMPATIBLE.

FROM thorny wilds a monster came,
That filled my soul with fear and shame;
The birds, forgetful of their mirth,
Drooped at the sight, and fell to earth;
When thus a sage addressed mine ear,
Himself unconscious of a fear.
"Whence all this terror, and surprise,
Distracted looks, and streaming eyes?
Far from the world and its affairs,
The joy it boasts, the pain it shares,
Surrender, without guile or art,
To God, an undivided heart;
The savage form, so feared before,
Shall scare your trembling soul no more;
For loathsome as the sight may be,
'Tis but the Love of Self you see.
Fix all your Love on God alone,
Choose but His will, and hate your own:
No fear shall in your path be found,
The dreary waste shall bloom around,
And you, through all your happy days,
Shall bless His name, and sing His praise."
O lovely solitude, how sweet
The silence of this calm retreat!
Here Truth, the fair whom I pursue,
Gives all her beauty to my view;

The simple, unadorned display
Charms every pain and fear away.
O Truth! whom millions proudly slight;
O Truth! my treasure and delight;
Accept this tribute to thy name,
And this poor heart from which it came!

LOVE FAITHFUL IN THE ABSENCE OF THE BELOVED.

In vain ye woo me to your harmless joys,
Ye pleasant bowers, remote from strife and noise;
Your shades, the witnesses of many a vow,
Breathed forth in happier days, are irksome now
Denied that smile 'twas once my heaven to see,
Such scenes, such pleasures, are all past with me.

In vain He leaves me, I shall love Him still;
And though I mourn, not murmur at His will;
I have no cause—an object all divine
Might well grow weary of a soul like mine;
Yet pity me, great God! forlorn, alone,
Heartless and hopeless, Life and Love all gone.

THE LOVE OF GOD, THE END OF LIFE.

Since life in sorrow must be spent,
So be it—I am well content,
And meekly wait my last remove,
Seeking only growth in Love.

No bliss I seek, but to fulfil
In life, in death, Thy lovely will;
No succours in my woes I want,
Save what Thou art pleased to grant.

Our days are numbered, let us spare
Our anxious hearts a needless care:
'Tis thine to number out our days;
Ours to give them to Thy praise.

Love is our only business here,
Love, simple, constant, and sincere;
O blessed days, thy servants see!
Spent, O Lord! in pleasing Thee.

LOVE PURE AND FERVENT.

JEALOUS, and with Love o'erflowing,
God demands a fervent heart;
Grace and bounty still bestowing,
Calls us to a grateful part.

Oh, then, with supreme affection
His paternal will regard!
If it cost us some dejection,
Every sigh has its reward.

Perfect Love has power to soften
Cares that might our peace destroy,
Nay, does more—transforms them often,
Changing sorrow into joy.

Sovereign Love appoints the measure,
And the number of our pains;
And is pleased when we find pleasure
In the trials He ordains.

THE ENTIRE SURRENDER.

PEACE has unveiled her smiling face,
And woos thy soul to her embrace,
Enjoyed with ease, if thou refrain
From earthly Love, else sought in vain;
She dwells with all who truth prefer,
But seeks not them who seek not her.

Yield to the Lord, with simple heart,
All that thou hast, and all thou art;
Renounce all strength but strength divine;
And peace shall be for ever thine;
Behold the path which I have trod,
My path, till I go home to God.

THE PERFECT SACRIFICE.

I PLACE an offering at thy shrine,
From taint and blemish clear,
Simple and pure in its design,
Of all that I hold dear.

I yield thee back thy gifts again,
Thy gifts which most I prize;
Desirous only to retain
The notice of Thine eyes.

But if, by Thine adored decree,
That blessing be denied;
Resigned, and unreluctant, see
My every wish subside.

Thy will in all things I approve,
Exalted or cast down!
Thy will in every state I love,
And even in thy frown.

GOD HIDES HIS PEOPLE.

To lay the soul that loves him low,
Becomes the Only-Wise:
To hide, beneath a veil of woe,
The children of the skies.

Man, though a worm, would yet be great;
Though feeble, would seem strong;
Assumes an independent state,
By sacrilege and wrong.

Strange the reverse, which, once abased,
The haughty creature proves!
He feels his soul a barren waste,
Nor dares affirm he loves.

Scorned by the thoughtless and the vain,
To God he presses near;
Superior to the world's disdain,
And happy in its sneer.

Oh welcome, in his heart he says,
Humility and shame!
Farewell the wish for human praise,
The music of a name!

But will not scandal mar the good
That I might else perform?
And can God work it, if He would,
By so despised a worm?

Ah, vainly anxious!—leave the Lord
To rule thee, and dispose;
Sweet is the mandate of His word,
And gracious all He does.

He draws from human littleness
His grandeur and renown;
And generous hearts with joy confess
The triumph all His own.

Down then with self-exalting thoughts;
Thy faith and hope employ,
To welcome all that He allots,
And suffer shame with joy.

No longer, then, thou wilt encroach
On His eternal right;
And He shall smile at thy approach,
And make thee His delight.

SECRETS OF DIVINE LOVE ARE TO BE KEPT.

Sun! stay thy course, this moment stay—
Suspend the o'erflowing tide of day,
Divulge not such a Love as mine,
Ah! hide the mystery divine;
Lest man, who deems my glory shame,
Should learn the secret of my flame.

O Night! propitious to my views,
Thy sable awning wide diffuse;
Conceal alike my joy and pain,
Nor draw thy curtain back again,
Though morning, by the tears she shows,
Seems to participate my woes.

Ye Stars! whose faint and feeble fires
Express my languishing desires,
Whose slender beams pervade the skies
As silent as my secret sighs,
Those emanations of a soul,
That darts her fires beyond the Pole;

Your rays, that scarce assist the sight,
That pierce, but not displace, the night,
That shine indeed, but nothing show
Of all those various scenes below,
Bring no disturbance, rather prove
Incentives of a sacred Love.

Thou Moon! whose never-failing course
Bespeaks a providential force,

Go, tell the tidings of my flame
To Him who calls the stars by name;
Whose absence kills, Whose presence cheers;
Who blots, or brightens, all my years.

While, in the blue abyss of space,
Thine orb performs its rapid race;
Still whisper in His listening ears
The language of my sighs and tears;
Tell Him, I seek Him, far below,
Lost in a wilderness of woe.

Ye thought-composing, silent Hours!
Diffusing peace o'er all my powers;
Friends of the pensive! who conceal,
In darkest shades, the flames I feel;
To you I trust, and safely may,
The love that wastes my strength away.

In sylvan scenes, and caverns rude,
I taste the sweets of solitude;
Retired, indeed, but not alone,
I share them with a Spouse unknown,
Who hides me here, from envious eyes,
From all intrusion and surprise.

Embowering Shades, and Dens profound!
Where Echo rolls the voice around;
Mountains! whose elevated heads,
A moist and misty veil o'erspreads;
Disclose a solitary bride
To Him I love—to none beside.

Ye Rills, that murmuring all the way,
Among the polished pebbles stray;
Creep silently along the ground,
Lest, drawn by that harmonious sound,
Some wanderer, whom I would not meet,
Should stumble on my loved retreat.

Enamelled Meads, and Hillocks green,
And streams that water all the scene!
Ye torrents, loud in distant ears!
Ye Fountains, that receive my tears!
Ah! still conceal, with caution due,
A charge I trust with none but you.

If, when my pain and grief increase,
I seem to enjoy the sweetest peace,

It is because I find so fair
The charming object of my care,
That I can sport and pleasure make
Of torment suffered for His sake.

Ye Meads and Groves, unconscious things!
Ye know not whence my pleasure springs;
Ye know not, and ye cannot know,
The source from which my sorrows flow:
The dear sole Cause of all I feel,—
He knows, and understands them well.

Ye Deserts! where the wild beasts rove,
Scenes sacred to my hours of love;
Ye Forests! in whose shades I stray,
Benighted under burning day!
Ah! whisper not how blest am I,
Nor while I live, nor when I die.

Ye Lambs! who sport beneath these shades,
And bound along the mossy glades;
Be taught a salutary fear,
And cease to bleat when I am near:
The wolf may hear your harmless cry,
Whom ye should dread as much as I.

How calm, amid these scenes, my mind!
How perfect is the peace I find!
Oh! hush, be still, my every part,
My tongue, my pulse, my beating heart!
That Love, aspiring to its cause,
May suffer not a moment's pause.

Ye swift-finned Nations, that abide
In seas, as fathomless as wide;
And unsuspicious of a snare,
Pursue at large your pleasures there:
Poor sportive fools! how soon does man
Your heedless ignorance trepan!

Away! dive deep into the brine,
Where never yet sunk plummet line;
Trust me, the vast leviathan
Is merciful, compared with man;
Avoid his arts, forsake the beach,
And never play within his reach.

My soul her bondage ill endures;
I pant for liberty like yours;

I long for that immense profound,
That knows no bottom and no bound;
Lost in infinity, to prove
The incomprehensible of Love.

Ye Birds! that lessen as ye fly,
And vanish in the distant sky;
To whom yon airy waste belongs,
Resounding with your cheerful songs;
Haste to escape from human sight;
Fear less the vulture and the kite.

How blest and how secure am I,
When quitting earth, I soar on high;
When lost, like you I disappear,
And float in a sublimer sphere!
Whence falling, within human view,
I am ensnared, and caught like you.

Omniscient God, whose notice deigns
To try the heart and search the reins;
Compassionate the numerous woes,
I dare not, even to Thee, disclose;
Oh! save me from the cruel hands
Of men, who fear not thy commands!

Love, all-subduing and divine,
Care for a creature truly Thine;
Reign in a heart, disposed to own
No sovereign but Thyself alone;
Cherish a Bride who cannot rove,
Nor quit thee for a meaner Love!

THE VICISSITUDES EXPERIENCED IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

I SUFFER fruitless anguish day by day,
Each moment, as it passes, marks my pain;
Scarce knowing whither, doubtfully I stray,
And see no end of all that I sustain.

The more I strive, the more I am withstood,
Anxiety increasing every hour;
My spirit finds no rest, performs no good,
And nought remains of all my former power.

My peace of heart is fled, I know not where;
My happy hours, like shadows, passed away;
Their sweet remembrance doubles all my care,
Night darker seems, succeeding such a day.

Dear faded joys, and impotent regret,
What profit is there in incessant tears?
O Thou, whom once beheld, we ne'er forget,
Reveal thy love, and banish all my fears!

Alas! He flies me—treats me as his foe,
Views not my sorrows, hears not when I plead;
Woe such as mine, despised, neglected woe,
Unless it shortens life, is vain indeed.

Pierced with a thousand wounds, I yet survive;
My pangs are keen, but no complaint transpires;
And, while in terrors of thy wrath I live,
Hell seems to lose its less tremendous fires.

Has Hell a pain I would not gladly bear,
So thy severe displeasure might subside?
Hopeless of ease, I seem already there,
My life extinguished, and yet death denied.

Is this the joy so promised—this the Love,
The unchanging Love, so sworn in better days?
Ah! dangerous glories! shown me, but to prove
How lovely Thou, and I how rash to gaze.

Why did I see them? had I still remained
Untaught, still ignorant how fair Thou art,
My humbler wishes I had soon obtained,
Nor known the torments of a doubting heart.

Deprived of all, yet feeling no desires,
Whence then, I cry, the pangs that I sustain?
Dubious and uninformed, my soul inquires,
Ought she to cherish, or shake off her pain.

Suffering, I suffer not—sincerely love,
Yet feel no touch of that enlivening flame;
As chance inclines me, unconcerned I move,
All times, and all events, to me the same.

I search my heart, and not a wish is there,
But burns with zeal that hated Self may fall;
Such is the sad disquietude I share,
A sea of doubts, and Self the source of all.

I ask not life, nor do I wish to die;
And, if thine hand accomplish not my cure,
I would not purchase, with a single sigh,
A free discharge from all that I endure.

I groan in chains, yet want not a release;
Am sick, and know not the distempered part;
Am just as void of purpose as of peace;
Have neither plan, nor fear, nor hope, nor heart.

My claim to life, though sought with earnest care,
No light within me, or without me, shows;
Once I had faith, but now in self-despair
Find my chief cordial, and my best repose.

My soul is a forgotten thing; she sinks,
Sinks and is lost, without a wish to rise;
Feels an indifference she abhors, and thinks
Her name erased for ever from the skies.

Language affords not my distress a name,—
Yet is it real, and no sickly dream;
'Tis Love inflicts it; though to feel that flame
Is all I know of happiness supreme.

When Love departs, a chaos wide and vast,
And dark as Hell, is opened in the soul;
When Love returns, the gloomy scene is past,
No tempests shake her, and no fears control.

Then tell me why these ages of delay?
O Love! all excellent once more appear;
Disperse the shades, and snatch me into day,
From this abyss of night, these floods of fear!

No—Love is angry, will not now endure
A sigh of mine, or suffer a complaint;
He smites me, wounds me, and withholds the cure;
Exhausts my powers, and leaves me sick and faint.

He wounds, and hides the hand that gave the blow;
He flies, he reappears, and wounds again—
Was ever heart that loved Thee treated so?
Yet I adore Thee, though it seem in vain.

And wilt Thou leave me, whom, when lost and blind,
Thou didst distinguish, and vouchsafe to choose,
Before Thy laws were written in my mind,
While yet the world had all my thoughts and views

Now leave me? when enamoured of Thy laws,
I make Thy glory my supreme delight;
Now blot me from Thy register, and cause
A faithful soul to perish from Thy sight?

What can have caused the change which I deplore?
Is it to prove me if my heart be true?
Permit me then, while prostrate I adore,
To draw, and place its picture in Thy view.

'Tis Thine without reserve, most simply Thine;
So given to Thee, that it is not my own;
A willing captive of Thy grace divine;
And loves, and seeks Thee, for Thyself alone.

Pain cannot move it, danger cannot scare;
Pleasure and wealth, in its esteem are dust;
It loves Thee, even when least inclined to spare
Its tenderest feelings, and avows Thee just.

'Tis all Thine own; my spirit is so too,
An undivided offering at Thy shrine;
It seeks Thy glory with no double view,
Thy glory with no secret bent to mine.

Love, Holy Love! and art Thou not severe,
To slight n e, thus devoted, and thus fixed?
Mine is an everlasting ardour, clear
From all self-bias, generous and unmixed.

But I am silent, seeing what I see—
And fear, with cause, that I am self-deceived;
Not even my faith is from suspicion free,
And, that I love, seems not to be believed.

Live Thou, and reign for ever, Glorious Lord!
My last, least offering, I present Thee now—
Renounce me, leave me, and be still adored!
Slay me, my God, and I applaud the blow.

WATCHING UNTO GOD IN THE NIGHT SEASON.

Sleep at last has fled these eyes,
Nor do I regret his flight,
More alert my spirits rise,
And my heart is free and light.

Nature silent all around,
Not a single witness near;
God as soon as sought is found;
And the flame of Love burns clear.

Interruption, all day long,
Checks the current of my joys;
Creatures press me with a throng,
And perplex me with their noise.

Undisturbed I muse all night,
On the first Eternal Fair;
Nothing there obstructs delight,
Love is renovated there.

Life, with its perpetual stir,
Proves a foe to Love and me;
Fresh entanglements occur—
Comes the night and sets me free,

Never more, sweet sleep, suspend
My enjoyments, always new:
Leave me to possess my friend;
Other eyes and hearts subdue.

Hush the world, that I may wake
To the taste of pure delights;
Oh! the pleasures I partake—
God, the partner of my nights!

David, for the self-same cause,
Night preferred to busy day:
Hearts whom heavenly beauty draws
Wish the glaring sun away.

Sleep, self-lovers, is for you—
Souls that love celestial know,
Fairer scenes by night can view
Than the sun could ever show.

ON THE SAME.

Season of my purest pleasure,
  Sealer of observing eyes!
When, in larger, freer measure,
  I can commune with the skies;
While, beneath thy shade extended,
  Weary man forgets his woes;
I, my daily trouble ended,
  Find, in watching, my repose.

Silence all around prevailing,
  Nature hushed in slumber sweet,
No rude noise my ears assailing,
  Now my God and I can meet:
Universal nature slumbers,
  And my soul partakes the calm,
Breathes her ardour out in numbers,
  Plaintive song or lofty psalm.

Now my passion, pure and holy,
  Shines and burns without restraint;
Which the day's fatigue and folly
  Cause to languish, dim and faint:
Charming hours of relaxation!
  How I dread the ascending sun!
Surely, idle conversation
  Is an evil, matched by none.

Worldly prate and babble hurt me;
  Unintelligible prove;
Neither teach me nor divert me;
  I have ears for none but Love.
Me they rude esteem, and foolish,
  Hearing my absurd replies;
I have neither art's fine polish,
  Nor the knowledge of the wise.

Simple souls, and unpolluted,
  By conversing with the great,
Have a mind and taste, ill suited
  To their dignity and state;
All their talking, reading, writing,
  Are but talents misapplied;
Infants' prattle I delight in,
  Nothing human choose beside.

'Tis the secret fear of sinning
  Checks my tongue, or I should say,
When I see the night beginning,
  I am glad of parting day;
Love this gentle admonition
  Whispers soft within my breast;
"Choice befits not thy condition,
  Acquiescence suits thee best."

Henceforth, the repose and pleasure
  Night affords me I resign;
And thy will shall be the measure,
  Wisdom infinite, of mine:

Wishing is but inclination
  Quarrelling with thy decrees;
Wayward nature finds the occasion—
  'Tis her folly and disease.

Night, with its sublime enjoyments,
  Now no longer will I choose;
Nor the day with its employments,
  Irksome as they seem, refuse;
Lessons of a God's inspiring
  Neither time nor place impedes;
From our wishing and desiring
  Our unhappiness proceeds.

ON THE SAME.

Night! how I love thy silent shades,
  My spirits they compose;
The bliss of heaven my soul pervades,
  In spite of all my woes.

While sleep instils her poppy dews
  In every slumbering eye,
I watch, to meditate and muse,
  In blest tranquillity.

And when I feel a God immense
  Familiarly impart,
With every proof He can dispense,
  His favour to my heart;

My native meanness I lament,
  Though most divinely filled
With all the ineffable content
  That Deity can yield.

His purpose and His course He keeps;
  Treads all my reasonings down;
Commands me out of Nature's deeps,
  And hides me in His own.

When in the dust, its proper place,
  Our pride of heart we lay,
'Tis then a deluge of His grace
  Bears all our sins away.

Thou whom I serve, and whose I am,
  Whose influence from on high
Refines, and still refines my flame,
  And makes my fetters fly,

How wretched is the creature's state
Who thwarts Thy gracious power;
Crushed under sin's enormous weight,
Increasing every hour!

The night, when passed entire with thee,
How luminous and clear!
Then sleep has no delights for me,
Lest Thou shouldst disappear.

My Saviour! occupy me still
In this secure recess;
Let Reason slumber if she will,
My joy shall not be less:

Let Reason slumber out the night;
But if Thou deign to make
My soul the abode of truth and light,
Ah, keep my heart awake!

THE JOY OF THE CROSS.

Long plunged in sorrow, I resign
My soul to that dear hand of thine,
Without reserve or fear;
That hand shall wipe my streaming eyes;
Or into smiles of glad surprise
Transform the falling tear.

My sole possession is Thy Love;
In earth beneath, or heaven above,
I have no other store;
And though with fervent suit I pray,
And importune Thee night and day,
I ask Thee nothing more.

My rapid hours pursue the course
Prescribed them by Love's sweetest force;
And I Thy sovereign will,
Without a wish to escape my doom;
Though still a sufferer from the womb,
And doomed to suffer still.

By Thy command, where'er I stray,
Sorrow attends me all my way,
A never-failing friend;
And if my sufferings may augment
Thy praise behold me well content—
Let Sorrow still attend!

It costs me no regret, that she,
Who followed Christ, should follow me;
And though where'er she goes,
Thorns spring spontaneous at her feet,
I love her, and extract a sweet
From all my bitter woes.

Adieu! ye vain delights of earth;
Insipid sports and childish mirth,
I taste no sweets in you;
Unknown delights are in the Cross,
All joy beside to me is dross;
And Jesus thought so too.

The Cross! O ravishment and bliss!
How grateful even its anguish is;
Its bitterness how sweet!
There every sense, and all the mind,
In all her faculties refined,
Tastes happiness complete.

Souls once enabled to disdain
Base sublunary joys, maintain
Their dignity secure;
The fever of desire is passed,
And Love has all its genuine taste,
Is delicate and pure.

Self-love no grace in sorrow sees,
Consults her own peculiar ease;
'Tis all the bliss she knows:
But nobler aims true Love employs;
In self-denial is her joy,
In suffering her repose.

Sorrow and Love go side by side;
Nor height nor depth can e'er divide
Their heaven-appointed bands;
Those dear associates still are one,
Nor, till the race of life is run,
Disjoin their wedded hands.

Jesus, avenger of our fall,
Thou faithful Lover, above all
The Cross has ever borne!
Oh tell me,—life is in Thy voice—
How much afflictions were Thy choice,
And sloth and ease Thy scorn!

Thy choice and mine shall be the same,
Inspirer of that holy flame
  Which must for ever blaze!
To take the Cross and follow Thee,
Where Love and Duty lead, shall be
  My portion and my praise.

JOY IN MARTYRDOM.

Sweet tenants of this grove!
  Who sing, without design,
A song of artless love,
  In unison with mine:
These echoing shades return
  Full many a note of ours,
That wise ones cannot learn,
  With all their boasted powers.

O Thou! whose sacred charms
  These hearts so seldom love,
Although thy beauty warms
  And blesses all above;
How slow are human things,
  To choose their happiest lot;
All-glorious King of kings,
  Say why we love thee not?

This heart, that cannot rest,
  Shall thine for ever prove;
Though bleeding and distressed,
  Yet joyful in thy love;
'Tis happy, though it breaks
  Beneath thy chastening hand;
And speechless, yet it speaks
  What thou canst understand.

SIMPLE TRUST.

Still, still, without ceasing,
  I feel it increasing,
This fervour of holy desire;
  And often exclaim,
  Let me die in the flame
Of a Love that can never expire!

Had I words to explain
What she must sustain
Who dies to the world and its ways;
How joy and affright,
Distress and delight,
Alternately chequer her days;

Thou, sweetly severe!
I would make Thee appear,
In all Thou art pleased to award,
Not more in the sweet,
Than the bitter I meet,
My tender and merciful Lord.

This Faith, in the dark
Pursuing its mark,
Through many sharp trials of Love;
Is the sorrowful waste
That is to be passed
In the way to the Canaan above.

THE NECESSITY OF SELF-ABASEMENT.

Source of Love, my brighter Sun,
Thou alone my comfort art;
See, my race is almost run;
Hast Thou left this trembling heart?

In my youth thy charming eyes
Drew me from the ways of men;
Then I drank unmingled joys;
Frown of thine saw never then.

Spouse of Christ was then my name;
And devoted all to thee,
Strangely jealous, I became
Jealous of this Self in me.

Thee to love, and none beside,
Was my darling, sole employ;
While alternately I died,
Now of grief, and now of joy.

Through the dark and silent night
On Thy radiant smiles I dwelt;
And to see the dawning light
Was the keenest pain I felt.

Thou my gracious teacher wert;
And Thine eye, so close applied
While it watched Thy pupil's heart,
Seemed to look at none beside.

Conscious of no evil drift,
This, I cried, is Love indeed—
'Tis the giver, not the gift,
Whence the joys I feel proceed.

But soon humbled, and laid low,
Stripped of all Thou hast conferred,
Nothing left but sin and woe,
I perceived how I had erred.

Oh, the vain conceit of man,
Dreaming of a good his own,
Arrogating all he can,
Though the Lord is good alone!

He the graces Thou hast wrought
Makes subservient to his pride;
Ignorant, that one such thought
Passes all his sin beside.

Such his folly—proved, at last,
By the loss of that repose
Self-complacence cannot taste,
Only Love Divine bestows.

'Tis by this reproof severe,
And by this reproof alone,
His defects at last appear,
Man is to himself made known.

Learn, all Earth! that feeble man,
Sprung from this terrestrial clod,
Nothing is, and nothing can;
Life and power are all in God.

LOVE INCREASED BY SUFFERING.

"I love the Lord," is still the strain
This Heart delights to sing
But I reply—"Your thoughts are vain,
Perhaps 'tis no such thing."

Before the power of Love Divine
Creation fades away;
Till only God is seen to shine
In all that we survey.

In gulfs of awful night we find
The God of our desires;
'Tis there he stamps the yielding mind,
And doubles all its fires.

Flames of encircling Love invest,
And pierce it sweetly through;
'Tis filled with sacred joy, yet pressed
With sacred sorrow too.

Ah Love! my heart is in the right—
Amidst a thousand woes,
To Thee, its ever new delight,
And all its peace, it owes.

Fresh causes of distress occur
Where'er I look or move;
The comforts I to all prefer
Are Solitude and Love.

Nor exile I nor prison fear;
Love makes my courage great;
I find a Saviour everywhere,
His grace in every state.

Nor castle walls, nor dungeons deep,
Exclude His quickening beams;
There I can sit, and sing, and weep,
And dwell on heavenly themes.

There sorrow, for His sake, is found
A joy beyond compare;
There no presumptuous thoughts abound,
No pride can enter there.

A Saviour doubles all my joys,
And sweetens all my pains,
His strength in my defence employs,
Consoles me and sustains.

I fear no ill, resent no wrong,
Nor feel a passion move,
When Malice whets her slanderous tongue;
Such patience is in Love.

SCENES FAVOURABLE TO MEDITATION.

Wilds horrid and dark with o'ershadowing trees,
Rocks that ivy and briers enfold,
Scenes Nature with dread and astonishment sees,
But I with a pleasure untold.

Though awfully silent, and shaggy, and rude,
I am charmed with the peace ye afford,
Your shades are a temple where none will intrude,
The abode of my Lover and Lord.

I am sick of thy splendour, O fountain of day,
And here I am hid from its beams,
Here safely contemplate a brighter display
Of the noblest and holiest themes.

Ye forests, that yield me my sweetest repose,
Where stillness and solitude reign,
To you I securely and boldly disclose
The dear anguish of which I complain.

Here sweetly forgetting, and wholly forgot
By the world and its turbulent throng,
The birds and the streams lend me many a note
That aids meditation and song.

Here wandering in scenes that are sacred to night,
Love wears me and wastes me away,
And often the sun has spent much of his light
Ere yet I perceive it is day.

While a mantle of darkness envelopes the sphere,
My sorrows are safely rehearsed,
To me the dark hours are all equally dear,
And the last is as sweet as the first.

Here I and the beasts of the desert agree,
Mankind are the wolves that I fear,
They grudge me my natural right to be free,
But nobody questions it here.

Though little is found in this dreary abode
That appetite wishes to find,
My spirit is soothed by the presence of God,
And appetite wholly resigned.

Ye desolate scenes, to your solitude led,
  My life I in praises employ,
And scarce know the source of the tears that I shed,
  Proceed they from sorrow or joy.

There is nothing I seem to have skill to discern,
  I feel out my way in the dark;
Love reigns in my bosom, I constantly burn,
  Yet hardly distinguish the spark.

I live, yet I seem to myself to be dead,
  Such a riddle is not to be found;
I am nourished without knowing how I am fed,
  I have nothing, and yet I abound.

O Love, who in darkness art pleased to abide!
  Though dimly yet surely I see,
That these contrarieties only reside
  In the soul that is chosen of Thee.

Ah! send me not back to the race of mankind,
  Perversely by folly beguiled,
For where, in the crowds I have left, shall I find
  The spirit and heart of a child.

Here let me, though fixed in a desert, be free;
  A little one whom they despise,
Though lost to the world, if in union with Thee,
  Shall be holy and happy and wise.

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FABLES OF GAY.

LEPUS MULTIS AMICIS.

Lusus amicitia est, uni nisi dedita, ceu fit,
  Simplice ni nexus fœdere, lusus amor.
Incerto genitore puer, non sæpe paternæ
  Tutamen novit, deliciasque domûs:
Quique sibi fidos fore multos sperat, amicus,
  Mirum est huic misero si ferat ullus opem.
Comis erat, mitisque, et nolle et velle paratus
  Cum quovis, Gaii more modoque, Lepus.
Ille, quot in sylvis et quot spatiantur in agris

Quadrupedes, nôrat conciliare sibi;
Et quisque innocuo, invitoque lacessere quenquam
Labra tenus saltem fidus amicus erat.
Ortum sub lucis dum pressa cubilia linquit,
Rorantes herbas, pabula sueta, petens,
Venatorum audit clangores ponè sequentem,
Fulmineumque sonum territus erro fugit.
Corda pavor pulsat, sursum sedet, erigit aures,
Respicit, et sentit jam prope adesse necem.
Utque canes fallat latè circumvagus, illuc,
Unde abiit, mirâ calliditate redit;
Viribus at fractis tandem se projicit ultro
In mediâ miserum semianimemque viâ.
Vix ibi stratus, equi sonitum pedis audit, et, oh spe
Quam lætâ adventu cor agitatur equi!
Dorsum (inquit) mihi, chare, tuum concede, tuoque
Auxilio nares fallere, vimque canum.
Me meus, ut nôsti, pes prodit—fidus amicus
Fert quodcunque lubens, nec grave sentit, onus.
Belle miselle lepuscule (equus respondet) amara,
Omnia quæ tibi sunt, sunt et amara mihi.
Verum age—sume animos—multi, me pone, bonique
Adveniunt, quorum sis citò salvus ope.
Proximus armenti dominus bos solicitatus
Auxilium his verbis se dare posse negat.
Quando quadrupedum, quot vivunt, nullus amicum
Me nescire potest usque fuisse tibi,
Libertate æquus, quam cedit amicus amico,
Utar, et absque metu ne tibi displiceam;
Hinc me mandat amor. Juxta istum messis acervum
Me mea, præ cunctis chara, juvenca manet;
Et quis non ultro quæcunque negotia linquit,
Pareat ut dominæ, cum vocat ipsa suæ?
Neu me crudelem dicas—discedo—sed hircus,
Cujus ope effugias integer, hircus adest.
Febrem (ait hircus) habes. Heu, sicca ut lumina languent!
Utque caput, collo deficiente, jacet!
Hirsutum mihi tergum; et forsan læserit ægrum,
Vellere eris melius fultus, ovisque venit.
Me mihi fecit onus natura, ovis inquit, anhelans
Sustineo lanæ pondera tanta meæ;
Me nec velocem nec fortem jacto, solentque
Nos etiam sævi dilacerare canes.
Ultimus accedit vitulus, vitulumque precatur,
Ut periturum alias ocyus eripiat.
Remne ego, respondet vitulus, suscepero tantam,
Non depulsus adhuc ubere, natus heri
Te, quem maturi canibus validique relinquunt,

Incolumem potero reddere parvus ego?
Praeterea tollens quem illi aversantur, amicis
Forte parum videar consuluisse meis.
Ignoscas oro. Fidissima dissociantur
Corda, et tale tibi sat liquet esse meum.
Ecce autem ad calces canis est! te quanta perempto
Tristitia est nobis ingruitura!—Vale!

AVARUS ET PLUTUS.

Icta fenestra Euri flatu stridebat, avarus
Ex somno trepidus surgit, opumque memor.
Lata silenter humi ponit vestigia, quemque
Respicit ad sonitum respiciensque tremit;
Angustissima quaeque foramina lampade visit,
Ad vectes, obices, fertque refertque manum.
Dein reserat crebris junctam compagibus arcam
Exultansque omnes conspicit intus opes.
Sed tandem furiis ultricibus actus ob artes
Queis sua res tenuis creverat in cumulum.
Contortis manibus nunc stat, nunc pectora pulsans
Aurum execratur, perniciemque vocat;
O mihi, ait, misero mens quam tranquilla fuisset,
Hoc celâsset adhuc si modo terra malum!
Nunc autem virtus ipsa est venalis; et aurum
Quid contra vitii tormina saeva valet?
O inimicum aurum! O homini infestissima pestis;
Cui datur illecebras vincere posse tuas?
Aurum homines suasit contemnere quicquid honestum est,
Et praeter nomen nil retinere boni.
Aurum cuncta mali per terras semina sparsit;
Aurum nocturnis furibus arma dedit.
Bella docet fortes, timidosque ad pessima ducit,
Foedifragas artes, multiplicesque dolos,
Nec vitii quicquam est, quod non inveneris ortum
Ex malesuadâ auri sacrilegâque fame.
Dixit, et ingemuit; Plutusque suum sibi numen
Ante oculos, irâ fervidus, ipse stetit.
Arcam clausit avarus, et ora horrentia rugis
Ostendens; tremulum sic Deus increpuit.
Questibus his raucis mihi cur, stulte, obstrepis aures?
Ista tui similis tristia quisque canit.
Commaculavi egone humanum genus, improbe? Culpa,
Dum rapis, et captas omnia, culpa tua est.
Mene execrandum censes, quia tam pretiosa
Criminibus fiunt perniciosa tuis?